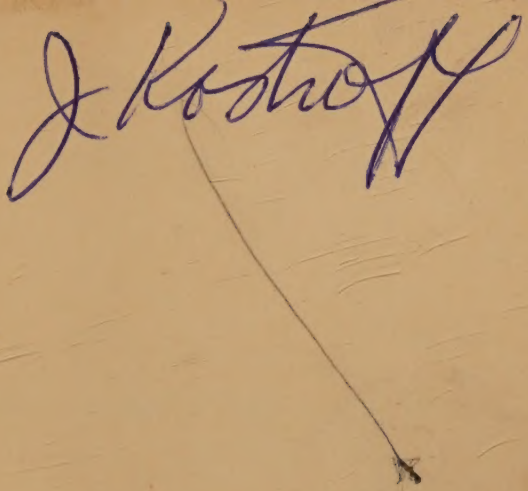
FAIRY STORIES AND FABLES

JAMES BALDWIN



FAIRY STORIES AND FABLES

RETOLD BY

JAMES BALDWIN

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FAIRY STORIES

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Little Tuppen	5
The Dog and the Wolf	10
The Mice and the Cat	11
The Fox in the Well	12
The Three Bears	13
The Deer	18
The Wise Goat	19
The Three Goats named Bruse	20
The Wolves, the Dogs, and the Sheep	24
The Hare and the Tortoise	25
The Silly Kid	26
The Three Pigs	27
The Wolf and the Lamb	36
The Dog and the Shadow	37
Little Red Riding Hood	38
The Quarrel	45
The Milkmaid and her Pail	46
The Story of Tom Thumb	47
The Fox who lost his Tail	58
The Wind and the Sun	59
Jack and the Beanstalk	60
The Fox outwitted	73
The Farmer and his Sons	74
The Battle of the Beasts	75
The Old Lion	83
A Wise Crow	84
Peter and the Magic Goose	85
Two Foolish Birds	94
The Lion's Share	95
Tom Tit Tot	96
The Dog in the Manger	107
The Camel and his Master	108
Cinderella; or, the Little Glass Slipper	109
The Mouse and the Lion	120
The Fox and the Crane	121
Princet and the Golden Blackbird	122
The Foolish Tortoise	135
The Ant and the Cricket	136
Puss in Boots	138
The Hares	149
Drakesbill and his Friends	150
The Tree and the Reeds	161
The Nest Builders	162
The Lark and the Farmer	165
The Fisherman and his Wife	168

CONCERNING THESE STORIES.

THE longer stories in this book are called Fairy Stories, because that is the name by which such tales are always known to children; and yet only a very few contain any direct reference to fairies. The most of them have to do with talking animals and with strange incidents and transformations such as have always delighted the childish fancy. They have been drawn from a variety of sources; and liberty has been taken to make such changes in the narratives as seemed most necessary to adapt them to the understanding and needs of the children of our own time and country. Free renderings, they may be called, of some of the most popular folk-tales of foreign lands. The Three Bears, Tom Thumb, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Tom Tit Tot are old English favorites dressed in modern garb; Little Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, Princet and the Golden Blackbird, and Drakesbill and his Friends are variants of the well-known French versions by Perrault, Marelles, and Sebillot; Little Tuppen and The Three Goats named Bruse are from Norwegian sources; and the rest are founded upon German originals. In the re-telling of these tales care has been taken to avoid whatever might distress the most sensitive child as well as everything that could give a wrong bias to his moral nature or distort his perception of the beautiful and the true. The language, although not childish in form, is so adapted to the comprehension of young children, that the stories may be read by them without difficulty — affording a greater pleasure, it is hoped, than any that could be derived from the mere hearing of them from the lips of others.

Most of the shorter stories, or Fables, are derived from the collection usually ascribed to Æsop, but of which Æsop was in nowise the author. An effort has been made to give them, in each instance, a form which is attractive to young readers and understandable by them. In the case of The Ant and the Cricket, the well-known popular poem is repeated with but slight variations. In none of these Fables has the editor altered the generally accepted order of the narrative, or changed the purport of the lesson intended to be taught.

FAIRY STORIES AND FABLES.

LITTLE TUPPEN.

One day an old hen whose name was Cluck-cluck went into the woods with her little chick Tuppen to get some blueberries to eat. But a berry stuck fast in the little one's throat, and he fell upon the ground, choking and gasping. Cluck-cluck, in great fright, ran to fetch some water for him.

She ran to the Spring and said: "My dear Spring, please give me some water. I want it for my little chick Tuppen, who lies choking and gasping under the blueberry bush in the green woods."

The Spring said: "I will give you some water if you will bring me a cup."

Then Cluck-cluck ran to the Oak-tree and said: "Dear Oak-tree, please give me a cup. I want it for the Spring; and then the Spring will give me water for my little chick Tuppen, who lies choking and gasping under the blueberry bush in the green woods."

The Oak-tree said: "I will give you a cup if some one will shake my branches."

Then Cluck-cluck ran to Maid Marian, the wood-cutter's child, and said: "Dear Maid Marian, please shake the Oak-tree's branches; and then the Oak-tree will give me a cup, and I will give the cup to the Spring, and the Spring will give me water for my little chick Tuppen, who lies choking and gasping under the blueberry bush in the green woods."

The wood-cutter's child, Maid Marian, said: "I will shake the Oak-tree's branches if you will give me some shoes."

Then Cluck-cluck ran to the Shoemaker and said: "Dear Shoemaker, please give me some shoes. I want them for Maid Marian, the wood-cutter's child; for then Maid Marian will shake the Oak-tree's branches, and the Oak-tree will give me a cup, and I will give the cup to the Spring, and the Spring will give me water for my little chick Tuppen, who lies choking and gasping under the blueberry bush in the green woods."

The Shoemaker said: "I will give you some shoes if you will give me some leather."

Then Cluck-cluck ran to Moo-moo, the Ox, and said: "Dear Moo-moo, please give me some leather. I want it for the Shoemaker; for then the Shoemaker will give me some shoes, and I will give

the shoes to Maid Marian, and Maid Marian will shake the Oak-tree's branches, and the Oak-tree will give me a cup, and I will give the cup to the Spring, and the Spring will give me water for my little chick Tuppen, who lies choking and gasping under the blueberry bush in the green woods."

The Ox, Moo-moo, said: "I will give you some leather if you will give me some corn."

Then Cluck-cluck ran to the Farmer and said: "Dear Farmer, please give me some corn. I want it for Moo-moo, the Ox; for then the Ox will give me some leather, and I will give the leather to the Shoemaker, and the Shoemaker will give me shoes, and I will give the shoes to Maid Marian, and Maid Marian will shake the Oak-tree's branches, and the Oak-tree will give me a cup, and I will give the cup to the Spring, and the Spring will give me water for my little chick Tuppen, who lies choking and gasping under the blueberry bush in the green woods."

The Farmer said: "I will give you some corn if you will give me a plow."

Then Cluck-cluck ran to the Blacksmith and said: "Dear Blacksmith, please give me a plow. I want it for the Farmer; for then the Farmer will give me some corn, and I will give the corn to the Ox, and the Ox will give me leather, and I will

give the leather to the Shoemaker, and the Shoemaker will give me shoes, and I will give the shoes to Maid Marian, and Maid Marian will shake the Oak-tree's branches, and the Oak-tree will give me a cup, and I will give the cup to the Spring, and the Spring will give me water for my little chick

Tuppen, who lies choking and gasping under the blueberry bush in the green woods."

The Blacksmith said: "I will give you a plow if you will give me some iron."

Then Cluck-cluck ran to the busy little Dwarfs who live under the mountains and have all the iron that is found in the mines. "Dear, dear Dwarfs,"

she said, "please give me some of your iron. I want it for the Blacksmith; for then the Blacksmith will give me a plow, and I will give the plow to the Farmer, and the Farmer will give me corn, and I will give the corn to the Ox, and the Ox will give me leather, and I will give the leather to the Shoemaker, and the Shoemaker will give me shoes, and I will give the shoes to Maid Marian, and Maid Marian will shake the Oak-tree's branches, and the Oak-tree will give me a cup, and I will give the cup to the Spring, and the Spring will give me water for my little chick Tuppen, who lies choking and gasping under the blueberry bush in the green woods."

The little Dwarfs who live under the mountains had pity on poor Cluck-cluck, and they gave her a great heap of red iron ore from their mines.

Then she gave the iron to the Blacksmith, and the plow to the Farmer, and the corn to the Ox, and the leather to the Shoemaker, and the shoes to Maid Marian; and Maid Marian shook the Oak-tree, and the Spring got the acorn cup, and Cluck-cluck carried it full of water to her little chick Tuppen.

Then little Tuppen drank the water, and was well again, and ran chirping and singing among the long grass, as if nothing had happened to him.

THE DOG AND THE WOLF.

One warm day a Dog lay down under a tree in a field, and was soon fast asleep. In a little while a Wolf came out of the woods and was about to seize him and eat him up.

"Cousin Wolf," cried the Dog, "don't you see how thin I am? I am not fit for you to eat now. If you will only wait a few days, you will find that I shall make you a better meal. Master is going to have a big dinner next week, and then there will be so much to eat that I shall grow plump and fat."

"Well, if that is the case," said the Wolf, "I think I will wait a little while. You may go now, and live till after the dinner."

In two weeks the Wolf came back, but the Dog was not in the field. He was asleep on the house top.

"Come down, and let me see how fat you are," said the Wolf.

The Dog woke up and said: "Cousin Wolf,

if you ever find me asleep in the field again, you may eat me. But if you are wise, you will not wait till after the master has had that big dinner."

THE MICE AND THE CAT.

An old Cat was in a fair way to kill all the Mice in the barn. One day the Mice met to talk about the great harm that she was doing them. Each one told of some plan by which to keep out of her way.

"Do as I say," said a gray-bearded Mouse who was thought to be very wise, — "Do as I say: Hang a bell to the Cat's neck, and then when we hear it ring, we shall know that she is coming."

"Good! good!" said all the rest; and they ran to get the bell.

"Now, which one of you will hang it to the Cat's neck?" asked the wise one with the gray beard.

"Not I! not I!" cried all the Mice at once.

THE FOX IN THE WELL.

A Fox was going through a field one day, and fell into a well. He was not hurt at all, but he could not get out. He called for help as loud as he could, but no one heard him for a long time. By and by a Wolf passed that way and stopped to listen. Then he went to the edge of the well and looked down.

"Who is there?" he asked.

"Dear Wolf, it is I," cried the Fox; "and I am so glad that you have come. You will help me out, I am sure."

"Poor little Foxie!" said the Wolf; "how did you get down there? How long have you been there? It must be very damp so deep down in a well like this. I do pity you with all my heart. You might catch cold in such a place; and how sad it would be if you were to die!"

"Oh, Wolf, Wolf!" cried the Fox. "This is no time to talk. Help me out, quick, and then pity me afterwards."

THE THREE BEARS.

Not far from the edge of a pleasant wood there once lived three Bears. They were kind, good Bears, not rude, wild fellows like those that live now; and they had built for themselves a snug little house, with one door and one window, and a wild vine running over the roof. But the strangest thing about them was that they were all just alike except in size. One of them was a Little Wee Bear, and one was a Middle-sized Bear, and one was a Great Huge Bear.

They had everything in their house that three Bears could want. They had a little wee bowl for the Little Wee Bear, and a middle-sized bowl for the Middle-sized Bear, and a great huge bowl for the Great Huge Bear. They had a little wee chair for the Little Wee Bear, and a middle-sized chair for the Middle-sized Bear, and a great huge chair for the Great Huge Bear. And they had a little wee bed for the Little Wee Bear, and a middle-sized bed for the Middle-sized Bear, and a great huge bed for the Great Huge Bear. And that was all.

One morning they had soup for breakfast; but when it was first poured into their bowls it was so hot that they could not touch their tongues to it.

"Let us take a walk over the hill," said the Middle-sized Bear; "and, by the time we get back, the soup will be cool enough to eat."

They were very good-natured Bears, even when they were hungry, and so without another word they all went out for the walk. The Great Huge Bear went first, the Middle-sized Bear went next, and the Little Wee Bear went last.

They had not been gone long when a little girl named Silver-hair came that way. When she saw the snug little house with the wild vine running over the roof, she wondered whose it could be. Then she stopped and peeped in at the window. She thought it was a very queer house, and in a little while she went round to the door and knocked.

Nobody answered. She wondered if all the people were asleep. She knocked again, very loud. They must be away from home. She lifted the latch softly, and the door opened. Everything seemed so cozy in the little sitting room that she thought she would step inside for a few minutes and rest herself, for indeed she was very, very tired.

She looked around. There were the three bowls of soup on the floor, where they had been put to cool. She was hungry, and thought it would be so nice to try a mouthful of the soup.

She tasted that which was in the largest bowl; but it was too cold. Then she tasted that which was in the middle-sized bowl; but it was too hot. Then she tasted that which was in the little bowl; and it was so good that she ate it all up.

On the other side of the room were three chairs, all just alike except in size, and she thought it would be very nice to sit down and rest before going home. She first tried the great huge chair; but it was too high. Then she tried the middle-sized chair; but it was too broad. Then she tried the little chair; and, since it was just right, she sat down in it so hard that she broke it in pieces.

She next looked at the beds in the bedroom, and thought how nice it would be to take a short nap before going home. She first tried the great huge

bed; but it was too soft. Then she tried the middle-sized bed; but it was too hard. Then she tried the little bed; and, since it was just right, she lay down upon it and was soon fast asleep.

While she was sleeping, the three bears came home from their walk. They were hungry, and they made haste to look into the bowls. The Great Huge Bear took up his bowl first:—

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TASTING MY SOUP!" he roared.

Then the Middle-sized Bear took up his bowl:—

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TASTING MY SOUP!" he growled.

Then the Little Wee Bear took up his bowl:—

"Somebody has been tasting my soup, and has eaten it all up!" he whined.

Then they went across the room to sit in their chairs. The Great Huge Bear tried his chair first:—

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" he roared.

Then the Middle-sized Bear tried his chair:—

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" he growled.

Then the Little Wee Bear tried his chair:—

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair, and has broken it in pieces!" he whined.

After that they went into the bedroom. The Great Huge Bear saw his bed first:—

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TUMBLING MY BED!" he roared.

Then the Middle-sized Bear saw his bed:—

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TUMBLING MY BED!" he growled.

And then the Little Wee Bear saw his bed:—

"Somebody has been tumbling my bed," he cried in a shrill, piping voice, "and here she is now!"

The noise made by the Little Wee Bear caused Silver-hair to wake up. When she opened her eyes and saw the three Bears so close to her, she was badly scared. She sprang up, and ran out of the house as fast as she could. The three Bears went to the door to look after her, and saw her running through the woods towards her own home. But they didn't follow her; they were too kind and good for that.

And that is all that I know about little Silver-hair and the three Bears that lived in their snug little house with the wild vine running over the roof.

THE DEER.

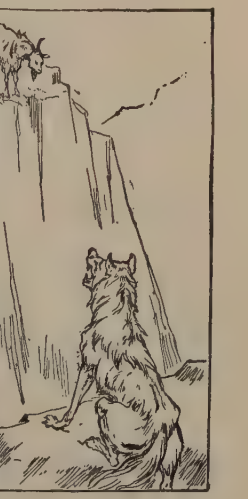
One warm day a Deer went down to a brook to get a drink. The stream was smooth and clear, and he could see himself in the water. He looked at his horns and was very proud of them, for they were large and long and had many branches. But when he saw his feet he was ashamed to own them, they were so slim and small.

While he stood knee-deep in the water, and was thinking only of his fine horns, a Lion saw him and came leaping out from the tall grass to get him. The Deer would have been caught at once if he had not jumped quickly out of the brook. He ran as fast as he could, and his feet were so light and swift that he soon left the Lion far behind. But by and by he had to pass through

some woods, and, as he was running, his horns were caught in some vines that grew among the trees. Before he could get loose the Lion was upon him.

"Ah me!" cried the Deer. "The things which pleased me most will now cause my death; while the things which I thought so mean and poor would have carried me safe out of danger."

THE WISE GOAT.



One day a Goat was on the top of a high, steep rock, picking the few blades of grass that he could find there. A Wolf who was watching him from the foot of the rock, wanted to catch him, but could not climb so steep a place.

"Friend Goat!" said he, "come down into the field. You can get all the sweet grass here that you can eat, and it will not cost you anything."

"Thank you," said the Goat. "You are inviting me not to feed myself, but to feed you."

THE THREE GOATS NAMED BRUSE.

THREE goats once lived together on a mountain, and every one of them was named Bruse. It was hard for them to find enough to eat, for there were no trees there, and only a few blades of grass grew among the cracks and crevices of the rocks.

"What a fine pasture that must be on the other mountain beyond the waterfall!" said the great goat Bruse one morning.

"Yes," said his brother, the second goat Bruse, "you can see the green grass plainly. It makes my mouth water only to look at it; and it is all going to waste, for there is not a goat there to eat it."

"I mean to get my dinner there this very day," said the little goat Bruse; and he held his head very high.

"So will we, little brother," said the other two goats. "But since you cannot eat so fast as we, you may go first, and we will follow after."

Now, the only way by which they could reach the other mountain was to cross a high bridge over the waterfall. Under this bridge, among the rocks and the spray, there lived a great ugly fairy called a Troll, with eyes as big as frying pans and a nose as long as a broomstick. But the little goat Bruse knew nothing about

the Troll; he only saw the green grass on the side of the mountain, and he never thought of any danger on the way. When he came to the bridge he looked neither to the right nor to the left, but walked bravely along.

"Trip trap, trip trap, trip trap," said the bridge, as he went over.

"Who trips on my bridge?" cried the Troll.

"Oh, it's only the little goat Bruse. I am going over to the other mountain to get my dinner and grow fat," said the goat, in a soft voice.

'No, you won't," said the Troll, "for I am going to eat you up;" and he began to stir from his place by the side of the waterfall.

"Oh! now, please don't hurt me, for I am so little," said the goat; "but if you will wait a while, the second goat Bruse will soon come this way, and he is much bigger."

"Very well," said the Troll; "you may pass."

In about an hour the second goat Bruse came down to cross the bridge. He held his head up very high, and looked neither to the right nor to the left.

"Trap trap, trap trap, trap trap," said the bridge.

"Who is it that trap-traps over my bridge?" asked the Troll.

"Oh, it is only the second goat Bruse. I am going across to the other mountain to eat grass and grow fat," said the goat, trying to make his harsh voice sound weak and piping.

"No, you are not," said the Troll, "for I am going to eat you up;" and he made a great noise in the water about him.

"Oh! please don't," said the goat, "for I would hardly make you a good mouthful. Wait a little while, and then the great goat Bruse will come this way; he is ever so much bigger than I am."

"Very well," said the Troll; "you may pass."

In a few minutes the great goat Bruse came down, and walked boldly upon the bridge.

"Trap trop, trap trop, trap trop — ah!" said the bridge. For the goat was so heavy that the boards creaked and cracked under him.

"Who goes tramping on my bridge?" cried the Troll.

"It is I, the great goat Bruse," said the goat, in a very coarse tone of voice. "I am going over to the other mountain to eat up all your grass."

"No, you are not," said the Troll, making a great stir in the waterfall; "for it is I that am going to eat you. I am after you now!"

"Well, then, come on," said the goat, "and I'll give you a taste of my two spears."

And as soon as the Troll lifted his head above the sides of the bridge, the great goat Bruse rushed upon him, and thrust out his eyes with his horns, and broke his bones, and tossed him back into the deep, cold water below. Then he went on, over to the other mountain.

The three goats named Bruse found more green grass than they could eat in many a day, and they grew so fat that they never cared to cross the bridge over the waterfall again. And if they have not lost their fat, they are still as fat as ever.

THE WOLVES, THE DOGS, AND THE SHEEP.

Once some Wolves saw a fine flock of Sheep in a field, and wanted to get at them. But they were afraid of the Dogs that stayed in the field and guarded the Sheep day and night.

At last they thought of a plan to get rid of the Dogs.

They sent word to the Sheep, and said: "The Dogs are not your friends; they are your masters and want to keep you from being free. We are your true friends. Only send the Dogs away, and trust us, and you will see how well we shall all live together, and how happy and free you will be."

The foolish Sheep believed them and sent the Dogs away.

Then the Wolves came down into the field and soon made an end of the Sheep.

When people do as their enemies ask them to do, they may expect to fare as these poor Sheep fared.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

"WHAT a slow fellow you are," said a Hare to a Tortoise one day. "I pity any one who has to creep along as you do!"

"Do you?" said the Tortoise. "Suppose we run a race to the foot of yonder mountain. Slow as I am, I will beat you."

"What a boaster you are!" said the Hare. "You know very well that you can not. But of course I will race with you, although it will be no race at all."

"Let us ask the Fox to mark off the bounds and see that the race is fair," said the Tortoise.

"Agreed!" said the Hare; and he laughed at the thought of such a race.

So they called in the Fox, and he showed them where to start, and how far to run. Then, at a word from him, the race began.

The Tortoise lost no time, but started at once and kept straight on.

The Hare leaped along gaily for a minute or

two, and then, when he saw that he had left the Tortoise out of sight, he stopped to play a while. Then he went on a little farther, and, as the sun was hot, he lay down among the grass by the roadside to take a nap.

He woke up by and by, and ran as fast as he could. But when he came to the goal at the foot of the mountain, the Tortoise was already there.

"Slow and steady wins the race!" cried the Fox.

THE SILLY KID.

One day a Kid climbed upon the roof of a house, and this made him feel very proud and brave. As he was looking around and thinking how high he was, he saw a Wolf in the yard below. He knew that the Wolf could not get him, and so he began to call him names and make fun of him.

"Well, well!" said the Wolf; "you are not half so brave as you seem to be. It is not you that laughs at me; it is the high roof where you stand."

THE THREE PIGS.

In a fine old barnyard on the other side of the sea there once lived a good mother pig with her three children. Now in those days pigs lived just as they liked. They had a very good time, and learned many curious, cunning ways.

The name of the eldest of the three little pigs was Browny. He was not a very nice pig, for his face was always dirty, and he was never so happy as when playing in the mud. His mother tried hard to teach him to be clean and neat, but it was of no use; he would run away from her while she was talking, find the muddiest place in the yard, and roll about in it till he was the ugliest fellow you ever saw. "Ah, Browny," his mother would say, "some day you'll be sorry for your naughty ways; and then it will be too late for me to help you."

The name of the second little pig was Whitey. He was a clever fellow, and if he had not had one very bad habit he would have been as nice as any other pig. But he was greedy. He spent all of his time either in eating or in looking through the fence and wishing it was dinner time. When the dairy maid came down the lane with food for the pigs, he would stand on his hind legs and

squeal; and when she poured the food into the trough, he would jostle and push his two brothers out of the way, and try his best to get every mouthful for himself. His mother often scolded him for being so greedy and selfish, and he sometimes promised to do better; but as soon as he began to think of the dairy maid, he was as bad as ever.

The name of the youngest of the three little pigs was Blacky, and he was the best and prettiest of them all. He kept his face washed and his hair combed seven days in the week; and, for a pig, he had many cunning ways. His mother was very proud of him; and the farmer was fond of petting him and telling his friends that Blacky would be sure to take the prize at the next fair.

Now, late in the fall when the nuts could be heard dropping from the trees, the mother of these little pigs began to feel very uneasy in the barnyard.

"My children," she said, "I think that I must leave you for a time and go on a long journey over the hills through the oak woods. There are so many dangers in the woods, so many savage beasts and cruel men, that I cannot think of taking you with me. But I will build a nice new house for each of you to live in while I am gone."

"Dear mother, you are very kind, and we thank you," said all the pigs at once.

"Well, Browny," said the mother, "what kind of a house shall I build for you?"

"Oh, a mud house, mother! Build me a mud house!"

"And what kind of a house do you want, Whitey?"

"A house of cabbage," mumbled Whitey, his mouth being so full that he could hardly speak.

"And you, Blacky?"

"Oh, I should like a house of brick that will be warm in winter and cool in summer, and safe all the year round," answered Blacky.

"All right," said the mother. "Each shall have the kind of house that he wants. But listen to me. When I am gone, the fox will try his best to get you. He is very sly, and he will make believe that he is your friend, so that he can get into your houses. You must be very careful and keep him out; for if he once gets hold of you, he will carry you off and eat you up."

'Oh yes, mother, we'll watch out for the fox," said they all.

Not long after that, the old pig started on her journey, and the three little pigs went to live in their new houses.

Browny was very happy, and he would lie all day in his new home, rolling about on the cool mud floor and looking up now and then at the damp mud walls around him. He was about as pretty as a mud pig in the middle of a big mud pie. But one day there came a gentle knock on the door, and some one said:—

"Dear Browny, may I come in? I want to look at your nice new house."

"Who are you?" asked Browny, in great fright; for although the voice was soft and low, he felt sure that his strange visitor was the fox.

"I am a friend of your mother's," was the answer.

"No, you're not," said Browny. "You are the wicked fox, and you want to eat me up. But you shall not come in."

"Is that the way you talk?" said the fox; and he changed his tone very quickly. "Well, we'll see about that."

Then he set to work with his paws and soon dug a hole through the soft mud wall. A minute later he leaped through into the house and seized the poor pig by the neck. It was of no use for Browny to squeal. The fox threw him over his shoulder and trotted away with him to his den in the edge of the wood.

The next day the fox came back and knocked at the door of the cabbage house. Whitey was inside, eating the softest leaves in the walls, and peeping out through a crack so as to see the dairy maid as soon as she came with the soured milk. But when he heard the knock he was scared almost to death, for he felt sure that it was the fox.

"Who knocks?" he asked.

"A friend of your mother's," was the answer; "and I have come to have a taste of your nice cabbage."

"Oh, you must not eat the cabbage," said Whitey. "The walls of my house are made of it; and if you eat any of it, they will tumble down. Please go away." And he began to cry and wish that his house had been made of something that could not be eaten up.

But in a few minutes the fox had torn a hole through the wall, and, just as the dairy maid was seen coming over the hill, he leaped inside and seized the pig by the neck. It was of no use for the dairy maid to scream. The fox threw poor Whitey over his shoulder and ran away through brush and briar, to his den in the edge of the wood.

On the third day the fox came again. For he

had made up his mind to get all three of the pigs penned up in his den, and then to invite his friends to come in and have some fun and a feast. But Blacky, in his strong brick house, was ready for him.

The fox knocked at the door: Toc, toc, toc!

"Who knocks?" asked Blacky.

"A friend of your mother's," was the answer. "I have brought you a nice basket of eggs for your dinner. Open the door, and let me in."

"No, I will not," said Blacky. "I know who you are. You are the fox that carried off my two brothers. But you will not get me."

"We'll see about that," answered the fox, trying his best to open the door.

When he saw how strong the house was built and how well all the doors and windows were fastened, he knew that it was of no use trying to break in. So, after he had looked all around, he turned about and started back to his den.

"Never mind, friend Blacky," he said, shaking his fist in the air. "I'll get you yet in spite of your brick house, and then won't I make short work of you?"

The next day Blacky went to town to buy a new dinner kettle. As he was coming home with the kettle on his back he heard a noise in the

thicket behind him; and then he heard some one walking among the leaves. He knew it was the fox, and his heart beat very fast; but he did not stop.

When he got to the top of the hill, he saw his own little red house at the foot of it on the

other side. How he wished he was safe in doors! But the fox could run very fast — much faster than he. Then a bright thought came into his head. He lifted the lid off the kettle and crept into it. He curled himself up snugly at the bottom. Then he pulled the lid down again and held it on very

tight. When everything was ready he squirmed about in the kettle until it fell over and began to roll down the hill.

When the fox came up, all that he saw was the big kettle rolling along at a great rate straight towards the little red house in the barnyard. He wondered what had become of the pig, for he had felt sure of getting him this time. But while he was looking around, the big kettle stopped in front of the house, the lid flew up, and Blacky jumped out.

"Oho! that's your game, is it?" cried the fox; and he ran down the hill so fast that he turned heels over head two or three times before he got to the bottom.

But Blacky had carried his kettle into the house and bolted the door behind him.

The fox now began to try some other way to get the pig. If he could only climb upon the roof!

But Blacky was not afraid now. As soon as he had rested a minute he built a fine fire on the hearth and then hung the kettle, full of water, above it. As soon as the water was boiling hot he would have his supper.

While he stood watching the fire he heard a noise on the roof above him — pitter, patter, patter,

patter! The fox had climbed up and was on top of the house. But what harm could he do there?

Just then the water in the big kettle began to simmer and sing and the hot bubbles danced about at a great rate. Blacky heard a noise in the chimney. He looked up, and there was the fox coming down. Who would have thought of his getting into the house in that way?

But the fox was so sure of the pig that he did not see the kettle with the hot water in it; and before he knew it he had fallen right into it. Then, quick as thought, Blacky slipped the lid upon the kettle, and the fox was scalded to death.

The next day Blacky started out to find the fox's den. If his brothers were still alive he wanted to set them free. It was no trouble to find the den; and, as for Browny and Whitey, there they were, tied fast to the root of a tree, and grunting and squealing in great fear.

"O Blacky, how glad we are that you have come!" they cried.

Blacky quickly set them free; and soon all three of them trotted back to the little brick house in the barnyard. And there they lived happily until their mother came home again.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

One day a Lamb went down to the brook to get a drink. A Wolf saw him and wanted to quarrel with him so as to have a good excuse for eating him up. While the Lamb was drinking, he went and stood by the brook, a little farther up, and cried out: —

"See here, you Lamb! How do you dare to muddy the water that I am about to drink?"

"How can I muddy it?" said the Lamb. "You are higher up the stream than I am, and the water runs away from you, towards me."

"Well, you called me names last summer," said the Wolf, "and now I am going to punish you for it."

"Last summer?" said the Lamb. "That was before I was born, and how could I call you names?"

"At any rate," said the Wolf, "you are trying to make out that I am a fool; and I won't stand that,

from you or anybody else." And with that he seized the Lamb and ate him up.

It is so with some men and children. When they have made up their minds to do wrong, they are sure to find some sort of excuse for it.

THE DOG AND THE SHADOW.

A Dog, with a piece of meat in his mouth, was crossing a brook.

As he looked down into the clear, smooth water, he saw his shadow there, and thought that it was another dog with a bigger piece of meat. So he dropped what he had, and jumped into the water to get the other piece.

But he did not find another dog there, and the meat which he had dropped sank to the bottom, where he could not get it again.

Thus, by being so greedy, he lost all that he had, and was obliged to go without his dinner.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

A LONG time ago there lived in the country a little girl who was as pretty and good as any rose in June.

I cannot tell you her real name, but those who knew her best called her "Little Red Riding Hood." They called her so because she wore a wonderful little cloak, with a hood that was bright as gold, and red like the clouds at sunset.

This cloak and hood had been given to her by her Grandmother, who was so old that she could not tell her own age; and people said that the hood was made of rays of sunshine, and that it would bring good luck to the one who wore it.

And so it did, as you will see.

One day the child's mother said: "Here is a nice cake that I have baked for your Grandmother. You may put on your cloak and hood, and go and take it to her, so that she may have it for her Sunday dinner to-morrow. You are old enough now to find the way by yourself; but you must be sure not to stop on the road to talk with folks whom you do not know. You may ask your Grandmother how she is, and when you have rested an hour, you must come back home. Will you remember?"

"Yes, mother, I will remember," said Little Red Riding Hood; and off she went with the cake, quite proud to think that she could go so far by herself.

Her Grandmother's house was a long way off, and she had to go through a big wood before she could get there. But she was not afraid. She looked at the tall trees that grew on each side of the path, and thought how nice it would be to stop a little while and play in the cool shade; and yet she did not stop.

All at once she heard some one cry out: "Who goes there?"

It was a Wolf who called. He had seen the child go into the wood, and had made up his mind to kill and eat her. But just at that time he heard some wood-cutters at work among the trees, and he feared they might come that way. So he changed his plans.

He ran towards Little Red Riding Hood, and frisked around her like a pet dog. The child had never seen a fierce wild beast, and she was not at all afraid of him.

"Oh, my dear Little Red Riding Hood," said the Wolf, "how glad I am to see you!" and he smiled and bowed as well as he could.

"You know me then!" she said; "and pray, what is your name?"

"My name is friend Wolf," he said. "And where are you going this fine day with your little basket on your arm?"

"I am going to my Grandmother's to take her a nice cake for her Sunday dinner to-morrow," said the child.

"Where does your Grandmother live, my pretty child?" said the Wolf.

"On the other side of the wood, in the little red house by the mill," said the child.

"Ah, yes! I know where she lives," said the Wolf. "I had just started there myself. I can go faster than you, and so I will run on ahead, and tell your Grandmother that you are coming. Then she'll be looking for you, you know."

Then he smiled and bowed and left Little Red Riding Hood, and ran by the shortest way through the wood. Soon he came to the little red house by the mill.

He knocked at the door: Tic, tic, tic!

There was no answer.

He knocked louder: Toc, toc, toc!

Nobody spoke.

Then he stood up on his hind feet and lifted the latch with his paw.

The door opened. There was no one in the house.

The good Grandmother had gone to town to sell her milk and eggs; and she had left the house in such haste that she had not had time to make her bed or hang up her night-cap.

"Ah, ha!" said the Wolf, "I'll have things all my own way now!"

So he shut the door, put the night-cap on his head, and then crept into the bed. He drew the sheets about him, and lay quite still, but he did not go to sleep.

All this time Little Red Riding Hood was walking quietly along, as little girls always do. Now and then she stopped to pick a daisy or a buttercup; now and then she turned to look at a bird, or to watch the bees among the flowers. At last she came to the little red house by the mill.

She knocked at the door: Tic, tic, tic!

"Who's there?" said the Wolf; and he tried to make his rough voice sound soft and gentle.

"It's me, Grandmother — it's Little Red Riding Hood!" she said. "I've brought you a nice cake for your Sunday dinner, to-morrow."

"Lift the latch, my dear, and the door will open," said the Wolf.

"What makes you so hoarse, Grandmother?" said the child, coming in. "Have you a cold?"

"Yes, dear, a very bad cold," said the Wolf, and he tried to cough. "Shut the door and latch it, my lamb. Put your basket down, and then take off your pretty cloak and come and sit by the bed. I want to talk with you a little while."

The good child did as she was told, — but remember this: she kept her hood on her head!

She thought it strange that her Grandmother had changed so much.

"What makes you look that way, Grandmother?" she said. "You look like friend Wolf."

"Oh, it's the night-cap that makes me look so," said the Wolf.

"What hairy arms you have, Grandmother!"

"All the better to hug you, my lamb."

"Oh, what a big tongue you have, Grandmother!"

"All the better to talk with you, my lamb."

"Oh, what a mouthful of great big teeth you have, Grandmother!"

"All the better for eating you up!" and the Wolf opened his jaws wide to bite the child.

But she put down her head and cried, "Mamma! Mamma!" and the Wolf caught hold of her bright hood.

Ah! What made him jump back as if something hurt him? What made him cry and shake his jaws as if he had tasted red-hot coals?

It was the little hood. The little hood had burnt his tongue and his throat and scared him out of his wits. For, let me tell you, the hood was a magic cap like those that you sometimes read about; and no harm could come to the child who wore it.

The Wolf jumped off the bed and ran about the room, trying to find the door, and howling and howling as if he had lost all his senses. And this was really the case; for in his fright

he fancied that all the men and dogs in the country were after him.

Just then the Grandmother came home from town with a long empty sack on her arm. She lifted the latch and saw the Wolf.

"Ah, you thief!" she cried. "Just wait a bit, and you'll see what I'll do with you."

She opened the sack wide across the door, and the scared Wolf sprang in, head first. No trap could have caught him so well. The brave Grandmother shut the sack; she tied the strings; she ran and threw it into the well; the Wolf was drowned.

"You scoundrel!" said the Grandmother. "You thought you would eat my little grandchild, did you? Well, the dogs shall eat you to-morrow, and Little Red Riding Hood shall have a muff made of your skin!"

Then she ran into the house, where the child stood crying and trembling with fear.

"My dear little one," she said, "if it had not been for your magic hood, what would have become of you?" And then she gave her a good piece of her cake and made her drink a small glass of fresh milk.

After that she took her by the hand and led her back home.

THE QUARREL.

A Lion and a Bear were hunting in the woods one day when both caught the same fawn. They at once began to quarrel about it.

"It is mine," said the Lion. "I killed it with my strong jaws."

"It is mine," said the Bear. "I killed it with my strong paws."

Then they fought over it till they were both so worn out that they could fight no longer. They were so weak that they lay upon the ground panting and glaring at each other and unable to move.

A Fox who happened to be going past, saw them with the dead fawn lying between them. He ran up quickly, seized the fawn in his mouth, and carried it away for his own dinner.

"What fools we are," said both the Lion and the Bear, "to go to all this trouble for the Fox."

The Fox laughed as he ate, and said, "If you had agreed between yourselves, you might have made me go hungry."

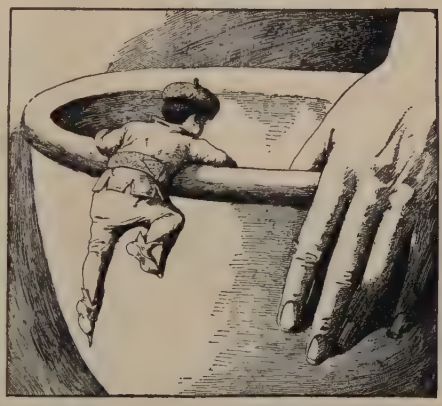
THE MILKMAID AND HER PAIL.

A MILKMAID was walking along with a pail of milk on her head, and singing merrily as she went. She was thinking of the money which the milk would bring, for she was carrying it to town to sell.

"Let me see," she said to herself. "Here are eight quarts of milk, and with the money which I get for it I can buy fifty eggs. From fifty eggs I can safely say that forty chickens will be hatched. The chickens will be big enough to take to market at Christmas, and they will bring a good price then. They will come to five dollars, at least, and with that I will buy a handsome new dress. I think I will buy a green one — yes, that's what I'll do. Then I will wear it to church, and all the young fellows will want to walk home with me. But I won't look at any of them — no, not I!"

She tossed her head proudly, and the pail, which she had altogether forgotten, tipped over and fell and all the milk was spilled on the ground.

THE STORY OF TOM THUMB.



More than a thousand years ago there lived in England a man named Merlin. He knew so many wonderful things and was so very, very wise that people called him a wizard.

Once on a time he was traveling across the country dressed as a poor beggar. In the evening he stopped at a farmhouse and asked if he might stay there all night; for he had walked far and was tired, and there were no inns in England at that time.

The farmer gave him a hearty welcome and led him into the house; and the farmer's wife brought him some milk in a wooden bowl and some brown bread on a platter.

Merlin was much pleased with their kindness, and he spent the night with them very happily. Everything about the house was neat and cozy, and there was no lack of anything that was

needed; and yet the farmer and his wife were both downcast and sad.

In the morning he asked them what it was that made them seem so unhappy in the midst of such plenty. They told him that they were sad because they had no children.

"Ah me!" said the poor woman, with tears in her eyes, "I would be the happiest woman in the world if I had a son. Why, if the boy were no bigger than my husband's thumb, I would be satisfied."

Merlin laughed at the thought of a boy no bigger than a man's thumb; and when he had eaten a breakfast of bread and milk, he bade the kind people good-bye and went his way.

Some years after that, he stopped at the same farmhouse again. He found everybody very happy this time; for the farmer's wife had a son, and he was not a bit bigger than his father's thumb. And they told Merlin many strange things about the little fellow.

One day when the mother was looking at the tiny babe and thinking how pretty he was, the queen of the fairies came flitting in at the window and kissed him and gave him the name of Tom Thumb. Then seven other fairies came dancing in, and dressed him as she told them to do: —

Of an acorn cup they made his crown;
His coat was woven of thistle's down;
His shirt of spider's web was spun;
His trousers were of feathers done;
His shoes were made of mouse's skin,
Tanned with the downy hair within.

Tom never grew any larger than his father's thumb; but as he got older he learned many funny tricks and was as cunning a little fellow as you ever saw. One day when his mother was making a batter pudding Tom climbed up on

the edge of the bowl to see how it was done. When his mother began to stir it she gave the bowl such a jar that he slipped off and fell, head over ears, into the batter.

His mother's eyes were not very good, and she did not see him. She kept on stirring and stirring, while the poor little fellow floundered about in the batter of milk and eggs and was half drowned. When she had finished the stirring, the good woman put the pudding in a pot and set it over the fire to cook.

Tom's mouth was so full of the batter that he could not cry out; but when the pudding began to get hot he kicked and floundered about at a great rate. His mother had never seen a pudding act in that way before, and she was frightened.

"My! my!" she cried, "I do believe that the pudding is bewitched." And before it was half done she took the pot off the fire and set it outside the door. "I'll see how it looks when it gets cold," she said.

Just at that time a poor beggar came to the gate and asked for something to eat.

"You are welcome to this pudding, if you want it," said the woman.

The beggar lifted it from the pot and put it into his basket and went away. He had not gone

far when Tom got the batter out of his mouth and began to cry. This so frightened the beggar that he dropped his basket and ran down the road as fast as he could go.

What a sorry-looking fellow Tom was when he crept out of the pudding! He climbed out of the basket and looked around. Then he walked home and told his mother all about it. Of course she was sorry to see him in such a plight, but she was glad that the fairies had not let him drown in the batter. She put him into a teacup and gave him a bath, and then laid him in bed.

Not long after this, Tom's mother went to milk her cow in the meadow, and she took him along with her. It was a very windy day, and, to keep the little fellow from being blown away, she tied him to a thistle with a piece of fine thread. The cow saw his acorn-cup hat, and thought that it would be a dainty morsel. So she picked poor Tom and the thistle up at a mouthful. Tom was very much afraid of her big teeth, and when she began to chew, he cried out as loud as he could: "Mother, mother!"

"Where are you Tommy, my dear Tommy?" said his mother.

"Here, mother," he said, "here I am, in the red cow's mouth."

His mother began to cry and wring her hands; and the cow was so frightened at the strange noise in her throat that she opened her mouth, and Tom jumped out. His mother caught him in her apron and ran home with him.

Not long after this, Tom's father made him a whip of barley straw, and it was funny to see him drive the cattle with it. One day, as he was driving the cows from the field, his foot slipped, and he rolled into a deep furrow. A raven which happened to see him, picked him up, and flew with him to the sea and dropped him in. Ah, what would have become of poor Tom then, if it had not been for his friends the fairies?

He had hardly touched the water when a big fish swallowed him and swam away. But the fish was soon caught by a fisherman, who sold it to the servants of King Arthur. When they cut the fish open in order to cook it, they were surprised to find the tiny lad; and Tom was glad to see the sun again, I tell you.

They carried him to the King, who laughed to see so little a fellow, and said: "He shall be my dwarf, and make sport for the Knights of the Round Table." And Tom was so cunning and so full of funny tricks that everybody loved him.

When the King rode out on horseback, he often

took Tom along with him; and if it rained, the little fellow would creep into the King's pocket, where he sometimes went to sleep.

One day the King asked Tom about his father and mother, and wanted to know whether they were as small as he was, and whether they were well off. Tom told him that they were as tall as other people, but that they were not very rich. Then the King gave him leave to go and see them, and said that he might take with him as much money as he could carry. This made the little fellow dance for joy, and he began at once to get ready for his journey.

He bought a very little purse, and the King gave him a silver threepenny piece to put into it. It was all that he could do to lift it upon his back, and it made a heavy load for him. Then he set out to travel across the fields to his father's house. It was not very far, but it took him two days and two nights to make the journey; and the silver was so heavy that he had to rest a hundred times by the roadside. He was almost tired to death when his mother ran out to the gate to meet him.

Tom's parents were very glad to see him. They made a bed for him in the sugar bowl, and feasted him for three days on a hazel nut. When the time came for him to go back to King Arthur, it had

rained so much that he could not travel. So his mother made a little parasol of thin paper and tied him to it; then she opened the window and gave him a puff with her mouth, and the wind carried him safe over hill and dale to the King's palace. Of course King Arthur and all the Knights of the Round Table were glad to have their little dwarf back again.

The suit of clothes which the fairies had made for Tom was now pretty well worn out, and so the King gave orders that he should have another. He was also knighted under the name of Sir Thomas Thumb; and the liveliest mouse in the King's stables was given to him for a steed. You would have laughed to see the little fellow then.

Of butterflies' wings his shirt was made,
His boots of a chicken's skin;
And by fairies learned in the tailor's trade
His coat and trousers both were made,
And lined without and within. —
For a sword, a needle hung by his side;
A dapper mouse he used to ride. —
Thus strutted Tom in stately pride.

It was certainly very funny to see Tom dressed in this way, and mounted on the mouse.

One day the queen of the fairies came to pay Tom a visit, and she was so much pleased with him

that she carried him to fairyland, and kept him there a good many years. She kept him there so long, indeed, that King Arthur and all his Knights had grown old and died before she thought of letting him go back. At last she gave him leave to visit his native land again; and, dressed in a suit of green, he went flying back to the palace where he had lived so happily. But nobody knew him, and people flocked from all parts of the country to look at him. The new King asked him who he was. Tom answered: —

"My name is Tom Thumb,
From the fairies I've come.
When King Arthur shone,
This place was my home.
In me he delighted,
By him I was knighted.
Did you never hear of Sir Thomas Thumb?"

The King was very much pleased with him, and ordered a little chair to be made, so that Tom could sit upon his table; and he built for him a palace of gold a span high, with a door an inch wide, and fitted it up for him to live in. He also gave him a coach, drawn by six small mice.

The Queen was angry because the King had spent so much money for Sir Thomas, and she made up her mind to drive him away. So she

told the King that the tiny Knight had been saucy to her.

The King sent for Tom in great haste, and Tom was so badly frightened that he hid himself in a snail shell and stayed there till he was almost starved.

One day he saw a large butterfly on the ground, near the shell. He ran out quickly, and leaped upon its back; it took wing, and carried him high up into the air; it flew with him from tree to tree, and from field to field; and at last it brought him back to the King's palace, and tipped him off its back into a watering pot.

Poor Tom was almost drowned, but he managed to creep out and climb upon the doorstep to dry himself. In a little while the servants found him, and picked him up.

When the Queen saw him she was in a great rage, and said that his head should be cut off; and they put him into a mousetrap to be kept there until they could tell the King about him.

A cat that was passing by saw something stir in the trap, and thought that it was a mouse. She pounced upon the trap and rolled it about till the wires were broken, and Sir Thomas stepped out in his suit of green.

Just then the King came in, and he was not half

so angry with him as Tom had feared; and soon the little fellow was as great a pet in the palace as ever.

But poor Tom did not live long to enjoy his good fortune. One day, as he was walking in the garden, a big spider ran after him. Tom drew his sword, and fought like a hero; but the breath of the spider was full of poison, and Tom could not fight long.

He fell dead on the ground where he had stood,
And the spider sucked every drop of his blood.

The King and his Knights were so sorry for the loss of their little pet that they wore mourning for sixty days afterwards; and they buried him under a rose tree, and raised a fine white marble monument over his grave. The following lines were written on the monument: —

Here lies Tom Thumb, King Arthur's Knight,
Who died by a cruel spider's bite.
He was well known in Arthur's court,
For gallant deeds and merry sport;
He rode in many a tournament,
And on a mouse a-hunting went.
Alive, he filled the court with mirth;
His death to sorrow soon gave birth.
Wipe, wipe your eyes, and shake your head,
And cry, — Alas! Tom Thumb is dead!

THE FOX WHO LOST HIS TAIL.

A Fox saw a trap lying in his path, and stopped to look at it.

"How very silly any beast must be," said he, "to allow himself to be caught in such a thing as that!"

Then, to show that he did not care for it, he whisked his tail into it. But the trap was too quick for him, and his tail, of which he was so proud, was snapped off in a moment. He was so much ashamed of himself that he ran into the woods, and did not show himself to his friends for a long time.

At last he thought that if the other Foxes would only lose their tails, too, he might then be in the fashion, and look as nice as any of them. So he called them together and made a speech to them, standing all the time with his back against a tree.

"Good friends," he said, "did you never think how very useless our tails are? They are always in the way when we run through the bushes, and, I am sure, we should be a great deal better off with-

out them. I, for one, am in favor of cutting them off. Let us all get rid of those useless burdens!"

"Turn round! turn round!" cried the other Foxes. "You have already lost your tail, or you would never give us such advice as that. All you want is to help your own case, and not ours."

THE WIND AND THE SUN.

The Wind and the Sun once had a dispute as to which was the stronger of the two.

"Do you see that traveler plodding along the road?" said the Wind. "Let us both try our strength on him, and let the one who can first strip him of his cloak be the winner."

"Agreed," said the Sun.

The Wind began first. He blew a blast which sent the leaves flying through air; he raised clouds of dust in the road, bent the tops of the trees to the ground, and even tore up one sturdy oak by the roots. But the traveler only drew his cloak the

more tightly around his shoulders, and kept on his way.

Then the Sun began. He burst out from behind a black cloud, and, little by little, darted his sultry beams upon the traveler's head and back. The man did not notice this much at first, but soon the heat was so great that he stopped to wipe the sweat from his face.

"Ah!" he said, "I cannot stand this. It is so hot that one might as well be in an oven!" Then he threw off his cloak, and carried it under his arm; and when he came to a tree by the roadside he sat down under its shade to cool himself.

After that, the Wind never claimed to be stronger than the Sun.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK.

THERE was once a boy named Jack, and he lived with his mother in a small house at the end of a field. They were so poor that it was hard for them to get food to eat and clothes to wear. All that they had in the world was a red cow, and they kept her for her milk.

One day Jack's mother said: "Jack, the rent must be paid this week or else we shall be put out of doors; and you know that there is not a

cent in the house. You must drive the cow to town and sell her for as much as you can get."

So Jack tied a rope to one of the cow's horns, and set out to drive her to the town. He had not gone far when he met a man with a red face and sharp gray eyes.

"My boy, whose cow is that?" said the man.

"She is my mother's cow," said Jack; "and I am driving her to town to sell her."

"Ah!" said the man, "and how much will you take for her?"

"As much as I can get," said Jack.

Then the man showed him five beans, and said: "I will give you these beans for your cow."

Jack had never seen such beans. One was white, one was red, one was blue, one was brown, and one was black. He looked at them a long time and thought how nice it would be to take them home and show them to his mother. As to how they could help her pay the rent, he did not think of that.

"All right!" he said to the man at last. "You may have the cow."

Then with the five beans in his hand he ran back home as fast as he could go.

"Are you back so soon, Jack?" said his mother. "How much did you get for the old cow?"

"Guess," said Jack.

"Five dollars?" said his mother.

"Guess again," said Jack.

"Six dollars?" said his mother.

"More than that," said Jack; "guess again."

"Oh, tell me! I cannot guess," said his mother.

"Well then, what do you think?" said Jack. "I met a man on the road, and he gave me these five beans for the old cow;" and he showed them to his mother.

Oh, how vexed she was! She could have cried, if that would have done any good.

"Ah, Jack, Jack, Jack!" she said. "What have you done? Have you gone and sold our cow for five beans?" Then she snatched them from his hand and threw them out of the window. "Now, you good-for-naught," she screamed, "take that — and that — and that — and that! And now, up to bed with you! You shall not have a bite to eat this night; and don't let me hear a word from you."

Jack sobbed as he climbed up to his little room. Then he crept into his bed and sobbed and sobbed till he went to sleep.

When he woke up it was some time before he could think where he was. He knew that it was day, and that he ought to get up; for the sun was

shining. But the light seemed to come into his room in streaks and spots, and not in one broad glare of brightness as it used to do.

He jumped out of bed and dressed himself quickly, for he wanted to see what was the matter. He knew that the sun was up high, yet it did not seem to be late. Ah, what were those green leaves that he saw in front of the window? There had never been anything of the kind there before. He ran to the window to look at them. They were the leaves of a beanstalk. The five beans which his mother had thrown out had sprouted and grown into the biggest beanstalk that anybody ever saw. It was so tall that Jack could not see the top of it; it went up and up and up, to the very sky. Who wouldn't give a cow for beans that would make such a stalk as that?

The beanstalk was so close to Jack's window that he stepped out among its branches; and then, since it looked so much like a ladder, he began to climb. He climbed and climbed and climbed and climbed, till at last he was in the sky. His mother's house looked like a tiny speck away down below him, but he did not want to go home till he had seen what kind of a place he had climbed up to.

There was a broad, smooth road running straight from the top of the beanstalk, and he thought he would walk out a little way and see where it led. He had not gone far when he came to a big tall house, with green blinds at the window. A big tall woman with red hair stood on the steps.

"You'd better go back," she said; but Jack did not hear her.

"Good-morning, ma'am," he said. "I have come a long way, and I am very tired. Will you be so kind as to give me a bite to eat, and let me rest in your house a little while?"

"You'd better go back," said the big tall woman. "This is no place for boys like you. For don't you know that my man is a giant? And are you not afraid that he will eat you up if he finds you? You'd better go back!"

"But I am so tired," said Jack, "that I can't go till I have had a bite to eat."

The big tall woman was not half so bad as you might think, for she had a kind heart. She took Jack into the kitchen, and gave him all the bread and cheese that he could eat. He was just eating the last mouthful when he heard a great noise in the hallway — thump! thump! thump! thump!

"Ah, there comes my man, now!" cried the

woman. "Get in here, quick! for he might eat you up if he should find you."

She opened the oven door, and pushed Jack inside, where he would be out of sight. And she was just in time, for the giant came into the room the very next minute — thump! thump! thump! thump!

He was a very large man and very tall. His foot was half as big as Jack's whole body, and he looked so fierce that Jack trembled in the oven.

"Here, wife!" he growled, "broil a leg of this beast for my breakfast; and be quick about it!" and he threw a fat calf upon the table. Then he went thumping round the room, and looking very cross and fierce. At last he stopped right in front of the oven, and cried out: "What's this I smell? What's this I smell?

> "Fee-fi-fo-fum,
> I smell the blood of an Englishman!"

"Don't be so foolish," said his wife. "It's only the blood of the calf! See, your hands are red with it! Go out and wash them, and make yourself clean and tidy for breakfast, while I set the table for you."

So off the giant went — thump! thump! thump! thump! — to the well at the back of the house.

There was a great tub of water there, and he was soon busy washing his hands and combing his long hair. Jack thought that this would be a good time to slip out of the oven and run away. But the big tall woman told him to keep still.

"Wait till after my man has eaten his breakfast," she said. "He will go to sleep in his chair, and then you can run away."

And so the giant had his breakfast. How he did eat! The broiled leg of the calf made him only a few mouthfuls, and a loaf of bread was only a small bite. After he had finished, he said to his wife,—

"Now fetch me the hen."

The big tall woman went out, and soon came back with a beautiful hen in her arms. Jack peeped out of the oven to see what the giant was going to do. Was he going to eat the hen, too? No; he put it on the table before him, and gently stroked its back. Then he said, "Lay!" and the hen laid an egg all of gold. He stroked it again, and said, "Lay!" and it laid another egg all of gold.

The giant played with the hen for some time, till there was a plateful of golden eggs on the table. But, by and by, he began to nod, then his eyes closed, and he began to snore.

"Now you may come out of the oven and run away," said the woman to Jack.

Jack crept out and looked around him. "I wish I had such a hen as that," he said.

"You may take her," said the woman; "but be sure that she doesn't make a noise and wake my man. The hen is no more his than it is yours."

Jack climbed up and took the hen off the table. Then he leaped down and ran as fast as his legs could carry him. But just as he got out of the house, the hen cackled and woke the giant.

"Wife, wife, where is my golden hen?" he cried.

And that was all that Jack heard, for he rushed down the road to the beanstalk, and climbed down the beanstalk to his mother's house, before the giant had time to snap his fingers.

"Just see what I have brought you from the top of the beanstalk," he said to his mother.

Then he showed her the wonderful hen, and told it to lay; and it laid an egg all of gold. Of course his mother was pleased, and she forgot all about the red cow which Jack had sold for five beans.

The little hen laid a golden egg for Jack every time he said "Lay!" to it, and soon he had so many eggs that he didn't know what to do with them. The rent was paid, and Jack and his mother had all the clothes they wanted to wear, and all the food they wanted to eat, and soon they began to think themselves very rich. But it wasn't long till Jack wanted to try his luck with the giant again.

So one fine morning he rose very early and began to climb the beanstalk. He climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, until he thought he should never get to the top. It seemed to be ever so much higher than before; but at last he was in the land of the sky, and saw the broad, smooth road running straight towards the place where the giant lived.

But this time the road seemed much longer

than before, and he walked, and he walked, and he walked, until the sun was setting in the west. Then at last he came to the same great big tall house; and the same big tall woman was standing on the steps.

"You'd better go back," she said.

But Jack begged that she would give him a bite to eat, and would let him rest in her house a little while.

"Are you the lad to whom I gave the golden hen?" she said. And then she told him that the giant had been very unkind to her ever since, and that he had said that he would like to catch and eat every boy he could find.

While Jack was eating bread and cheese in the kitchen as before, the giant came home — thump! thump! thump! He was cross, and seemed to be in a great rage; and he cried out:

"Hum, hum, hum,
Fee-fi-fo-fum!
I smell the blood of an Englishman!"

Jack had just time to creep into a bread box and pull the lid down after him when the big fellow came into the room.

"Where is the boy, wife?" he said.

"What boy?" she asked.

"The boy that took the golden hen," he said. "I smell him, I smell him! He must be here!"

"He hid in the oven the other time," said his wife. "Look for him there."

The giant rushed to the oven and looked in. But he found nothing there except a few big loaves which were baking.

"There!" said his wife. "What's the good of all your fe-fi-fo-fums? It's only the bread that you smell. Come, sit down to the table and eat your supper."

So the giant sat down and ate his supper. But he was cross and ill at ease. When he had finished he said:

"Wife, fetch me my harp!"

The woman brought the most beautiful harp that Jack had ever seen. She set it down on the table before him, and he said to it, "Sing!" Then the cords began to tremble, and sweet, wonderful music came from them as if they were touched by fairy fingers.

The giant listened to the music for a long time; and Jack peeped out from the top of the bread box and listened too. But, by and by, the giant began to nod, then his eyes closed, and he snored so loudly that the harp stopped its music and did not play any more.

"Now, you'd better run back home," said the woman to Jack.

Jack crept out of the bread box and looked around. "I wish I had such a harp as that," he said.

"It is yours, if you will take it," said the woman; and she handed it to him.

Jack took the harp in his arms and ran. But just as he got to the door the harp cried out, "Master! master!"

The giant woke up with a start, and Jack rushed away. The harp kept crying, "Master! master!" The giant hurried out, and saw Jack far down the road. But the big fellow had eaten and drunk so much that he could not run fast. He called out to Jack in great rage, and his voice sounded like thunder among the clouds.

Jack was half way down the beanstalk when the giant got to the top. The big fellow was afraid to step down among the branches, and so he stood there shaking his fist and roaring till Jack had reached the ground.

Then the harp cried out once more, "Master! master! master!"

When the giant heard it he swung himself down among the branches of the beanstalk and began to slide towards the ground. The branches were

in his way a good deal, and he couldn't move very fast.

"Mother! mother! bring me the hatchet! bring me the hatchet!" cried Jack.

His mother ran out with the hatchet, but when she came to the foot of the beanstalk she was frightened almost to death; for she saw the giant coming down, and heard his great voice like thunder among the clouds.

Jack took the hatchet and began to chop at the beanstalk. Soon it trembled and shook, and then it toppled over, and fell with a great crash among the rocks and trees. Of course the giant came tumbling down with it, and I have heard it said that he was killed outright.

But Jack did not see him fall, and he would never believe that the big fellow was hurt at all. And there are some who claim that the giant still lives in the big tall house in the land of the sky. But no one can go and see; for there is no beanstalk to climb.

For a long time after that, Jack and his mother were busy every day, listening to the golden harp and selling golden eggs. They built themselves a fine house of their own, and bought the red cow back again. And by and by Jack married a beautiful princess and lived with her happily forever afterward.

THE FOX OUTWITTED.

A Fox one day met a Cock who was famous for his wisdom, and the two cunning fellows began to talk.

"How many tricks can you do?" asked the Fox.

"Well," answered the Cock, "I could do three if I were to try. How many can you do?"

"I could do threescore and three if I were to try," said the Fox.

"Tell me about some of them," said the Cock.

"Well," said the Fox, "one thing that I can do is to shut my left eye and give a great shout. It isn't every animal that can do that."

"Pshaw!" said the Cock, "that is easy enough."

"Let me see if you can do it," said the Fox.

The Cock shut his left eye and crowed as loud as he could: "Cock-a-doodle-do!"

But he shut the eye that was next to the Fox, and, before he could think, the Fox had grabbed him by the neck and started to his den with him. The farmer's wife saw what was done, and

as Reynard went scampering down the road, she cried out:

"Drop that chicken! He belongs to me!"

"Tell her that I belong to you," said the Cock to the Fox, as he fluttered and gasped for breath.

The Fox opened his mouth to do so, and the Cock sprang quickly away and flew into a tree where he was out of reach. As the Fox slunk away among the bushes, the proud fellow shut one eye and gave a loud crow: "Cock-a-doodle-doo-oo!"

THE FARMER AND HIS SONS.

A Farmer had seven sons, who could never agree among themselves. He had often told them how foolish they were to be always quarreling, but they kept on and paid no heed to his words. One day he called them before him, and showed them a bundle of seven sticks tied tightly together.

"See which one of you can break that bundle," he said.

Each one took the bundle in his hands, and tried his best to break it; but it was so strong that they could not even bend it. At last they gave it back to their father, and said:

"We cannot break it."

Then he untied the bundle, and gave a single stick to each of his sons.

"Now see what you can do," he said.

Each one broke his stick with great ease.

"My sons," said the Farmer, "you, like these sticks, will be strong if you will stand together, but weak while each is for himself."

THE BATTLE OF THE BEASTS.

On a little farm, not far from a great forest, there once lived a man and his wife, who had an old dog and a very old cat. One day the man, whose name was Simon, said to his wife, whose name was Susan:

"Susan, what is the use of keeping that old cat? She hasn't caught a mouse for these ten years. I've made up my mind to drown her to-morrow."

"Oh, don't do that, Simon!" said Susan; "I'm sure she can catch mice almost as well as a younger cat."

"Nonsense," said Simon; "she has neither teeth nor claws, and the mice could dance under her nose without being caught. Besides that, she wouldn't know a mouse from a wild deer. I've made up my mind to put her out of the way."

Susan, who loved the cat, was very unhappy; and the cat, who was lying under her chair and heard every word, was very unhappy, too. When Simon went off to the fields to work, the cat mewed so pitifully that her mistress opened the door and told her to save herself if she could.

"Run to the woods, my poor little beast," she said, "run as fast as your old legs can carry you. But be sure that my man Simon doesn't see you."

The cat was glad to take her advice, and, when Simon came home at night, Susan told him that poor Puss had gone away, and was nowhere to be found.

"Well, I shall not have the trouble of drowning her," said Simon. "But there's the old dog — I wish we were rid of him, too. He is even worse than the cat. He is so blind that he can't tell a man from a gate post, and he is always barking at the wrong time, and going to sleep when he ought to be watching. I've made up my mind to hang him to-morrow."

"Oh, don't do that, Simon!" said Susan; "I'm sure he'll watch the house well after this."

"Nonsense," said Simon; "he is not only blind, but deaf, and thieves might carry off the whole house before he would give the alarm. I've fully made up my mind to put him out of the way."

Susan was very unhappy when she heard this; and the dog, who was lying in the corner and understood every word, was very unhappy, too. As soon as Simon had gone out to his work, the poor fellow got up and howled so pitifully that his mistress opened the door and told him to save himself, if he could, by following the cat.

"Run for your life, poor beast!" she cried; "but be sure that my man Simon doesn't see you."

The dog hurried off as fast as he could, and when Simon came home, Susan told him that Towser had gone away too.

"He is a lucky dog, for I had the rope ready for him," said Simon. But Susan was very sad, for she was fond of both the poor beasts.

The very next day the cat and the dog met in the woods. They had not been good friends at home, but now they were quite glad to see each other. After they had rubbed noses they sat down under a willow tree and began to talk about their bad luck. They had not been there long

when a friendly fox passed that way and saw them. He stopped and asked them what was the matter and why their faces were so sad.

The cat said: "Many a mouse have I caught in my day, but now that I am old and past work my master wants to drown me."

And the dog said: "Many a thief have I driven from the house, but now that I am old and almost blind my master wants to hang me."

"Ah, me! that's the way the world goes," said the fox; "but I'll help you out of your troubles, if you'll help me out of mine."

"We will do our best," said they; "but how can we help you?"

"By joining my army," said the fox. "The wolf has declared war against me, and is now marching to meet me. His army is a bear and a wild boar, and to-morrow we are to fight a battle at the salt spring."

"All right," said the dog and cat; "we'll stand by you. Better be killed in battle than hung or drowned just because nobody wants us."

"Follow me, then," said the fox; and the three started on the march to meet the wolf and his army.

Now it happened the next morning that the wolf and his army got to the salt spring first. They

waited for some time, and as the fox did not come, they began to feel very cross.

"He is a great coward," said the wolf.

"I am not so sure of it, general," said the bear. "He may be at one of his tricks. I think that I will climb up into this oak tree and see if he is in sight."

When he had climbed to the topmost branch he looked round, and said, "I can't see anybody!" Then he looked round a second time, and said, "I can't see anybody!" But when he looked round the third time, he said, "I see a great army coming over the hill, a mile away; and one of the warriors carries the funniest flag you ever saw!"

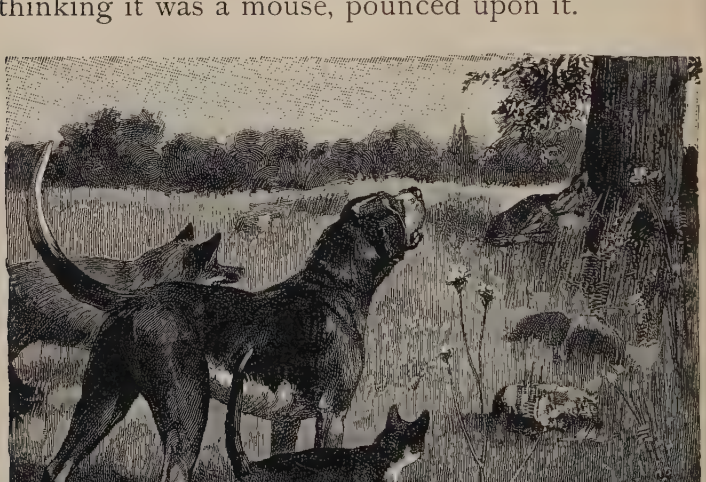
He was joking about the cat, who was coming with her tail stuck straight up into the air. The wolf and the wild boar laughed, and the bear grinned in his own funny way; and all of them thought of what fine sport they would have with the fox and his army.

"It is so hot," said the bear, "I think I'll take a little nap in the fork of the tree. At the rate those fellows are coming it will be an hour before they are here."

The wolf curled himself up at the foot of the oak; and the wild boar crept into the long grass and lay down where nothing could be seen of him

but the tip of an ear. And soon they were all asleep.

It was not long until the fox, the dog, and the cat came up. The cat saw the wild boar's ear, and thinking it was a mouse, pounced upon it.



The wild boar was badly scared, for he could not think what it was that had wakened him from his nap. He sprang up with a loud grunt, and then, without looking round him, ran for his life through the thick woods.

But the cat was frightened as badly as he. She sprang into the tree, and scrambled up the trunk

into the very face of the bear, who was sleeping in the shade of the green branches.

And who should be frightened now but the bear? He leaped up with a savage growl, missed his footing, and fell to the ground, right on top of the wolf, who was killed as dead as a stone.

"We have met the enemy, and the field is ours," said the fox, as he saw the bear rushing away among the trees.

"We came, we saw, we conquered!" said the cat, as she leaped nimbly to the ground.

On their way from the battlefield, the fox caught a dozen mice and gave them to the cat.

"When you go back to Simon's house," said he, "carry them in, one at a time, and lay them at his feet."

"All right!" said the cat; and she did exactly as the fox told her.

"There, Simon!" cried Susan, "didn't I tell you that I thought Puss was as good a mouser as many a younger cat?"

"Wonders will never end," said Simon. "Nobody shall harm that cat if I know it."

The fox and the dog were all this time skulking in the bushes behind the barn.

"I see that our friend Simon has killed the pig to-day," said the fox, "and no doubt Susan has

made sausages and put them away in the cupboard. Now, as soon as it is dark you must go into the yard and bark as loud as you can."

"All right," said the dog; and he did just as the fox told him.

"Simon," said Susan, "I hear poor Towser barking in the yard, and I hope that now he has come back you will be good to him. Do go out and see what is the matter. I am afraid there are thieves about, and they'll be sure to steal all my sausages."

"Nonsense!" said Simon. "The dog doesn't know a thief from a haystack. I'll hang him to-morrow, as sure as my name is Simon." And, as he was very tired, he would not get up.

The next morning Susan was up at daylight, for it was Sunday, and she was going to church in the village. She thought how nice it would be to take a few sausages to her aunt, who lived on the road, and she went into the kitchen and looked in the cupboard. But lo and behold! there was a hole in the floor, and not a sausage could be seen in the cupboard. She ran and called her husband.

"Simon! Simon!" she cried, "the old dog was right, and I was right, and you were wrong. Thieves have been in the kitchen, and they have not left me a single sausage. Oh, if you had only gone out when the dog barked!"

"Wonders will never end," said Simon, scratching his head. "I didn't think the old dog would ever bark at a thief. He is worth his food yet, and nobody shall ever harm him if I know it."

The fox did a sharp piece of business for himself that night, too; for it was he who stole the sausages.

THE OLD LION.

A Lion, who had grown too old and feeble to go out and hunt for prey, could hardly find enough food to keep him from starving. At last he thought of a plan for bringing the game within his reach.

He kept quite still in his den and made believe that he was very sick. When the other animals heard of his distress, they came, one by one, to look at him and ask him how he felt. But no sooner were they within his reach than he seized upon them and ate them up.

After a good many beasts had lost their lives in this way a Fox came along.

"How do you feel to-day, friend Lion?" he asked; but he took care to stand at a safe distance from the den.

"I am very sick," answered the Lion. "Won't you come inside a little while? It does me a great deal of good to see my kind friends."

"Thank you," said the Fox; "but I see that all the tracks point towards your den, and none point away from it."

A WISE CROW.

A TAME CROW had not had anything to drink for a long time. There was a little water in a pitcher, but it was so low that she could not reach it. What was she to do? She tried to break the pitcher with her beak, and then to overturn it on the ground; but it was too hard and heavy for that. Then she thought of a plan. She picked up a number of little stones and dropped them one by one into the pitcher. In this way the water was soon raised so high that she could easily reach it.

PETER AND THE MAGIC GOOSE.

THERE was once a man who had three sons. The eldest of these sons was called Jacob, the second John, and the youngest Peter. Now Peter was a good-natured lad and not very wise, and so his brothers liked to play tricks on him. When there was hard work to be done, it was Peter that had to do it; and when anything went wrong about the farm, it was Peter that had to bear the blame for it.

One day in summer Jacob wanted to go into the woods to cut down a tree. So his mother gave him a nice cake and a bottle of milk for his luncheon, and told him that as soon as he felt tired he must come home and let Peter finish the job.

While he was looking at the trees and wondering which one he should cut down, a little red-faced man came along. He seemed to be very old and feeble, and he said to Jacob: "Kind sir, will you not give me a piece of that nice cake which is in your pocket? I have not had anything to eat since yesterday."

"Not a bit of it," said Jacob. "I have nothing for beggars. If you want food, you must work for it as I do."

The little man said not a word, but hobbled away,

and Jacob began to chop his tree. He had hardly made a dozen strokes when his foot slipped; he fell against his axe and cut his arm so badly that he had to go home to have it bound up.

The next day John said that he would go out and finish cutting the tree. So his mother baked a nice cake for him, and gave him a bottle of milk for his luncheon, and told him to take care and not hurt himself, as Jacob had done.

John had hardly reached the wood, when he met the little red-faced man, hobbling along among the trees.

"Please give me a bite of the nice cake which your mother made for you, and let me have a taste of the milk in that bottle," said the man; "for I am almost dead with hunger and thirst."

"Why should I give you anything?" said John; "I have no more than I want for myself."

The little man made no answer, and John walked on through the woods, until he found the tree which his brother had begun to chop down. At the very first stroke, his axe glanced and struck his foot, and cut so deep a gash that the blood rushed out in a stream. Some men who were not far off heard his cries and came to him; if they had not bound up his wound and carried him home, he would have died.

The next day Peter's mother said: "Peter, do you

see what you have made your brothers suffer by your idleness? If you had gone into the woods as you should have done in the first place, this would not have happened. So take the axe and go now, and don't come home till you have cut that tree down." And then she gave him a hard crust of bread, and a small flask of sour milk for his luncheon.

It was a long time before Peter found the tree which his brothers had begun to chop, and when he came to it, he was both hungry and tired. He took the crust of bread from his pocket and was just going to taste of it, when the little red-faced man stood before him.

"Please give me one little crumb of your bread and a drop of the milk in your flask; for I am dying of hunger and thirst," said the poor fellow.

"Come and sit down with me on this log," said Peter, "and I will share it all with you."

So the two sat together, side by side, and ate their luncheon, and Peter thought that he had never tasted anything so good. When they had finished, the little man said:

"You are a very kind-hearted lad, and I will tell you a secret. When you have cut the tree down look in the hollow stump. There you will find a very strange creature which you must take up in your arms and carry to the King. It may be that

some people will try to touch the creature as you are walking along; and so you must be sure whenever it cries out, to say, 'Hold fast! hold fast! hold fast!'"

Peter took up his axe and began to chop with all his might. The chips flew first this way and then that, and it was not long till the tree began to tremble, and soon it fell with a crash to the ground. There was a round hollow place in the stump, and in it sat — a goose.

Peter thought that this was not a very strange creature after all, for he had seen geese all his life. If he had been wiser, he would have laughed at the idea of carrying it to the King; but, since the little man had told him to do so, he was foolish enough to believe that it was all right. So he picked the goose up in his arms and started at once.

He made his way out of the woods, and soon came to the great road which led to the King's town. By the side of the road there was an inn, and some men were standing in the wagon yard near by. When Peter came up with the goose in his arms, the innkeeper's daughter, who was looking out at the door, called to him, and said:

"Where did you get that pretty goose? Give me one of its feathers, won't you?"

"Come and pull one out," said Peter, kindly.

The girl ran out and tried to get one of the long white feathers from the bird's wing; but the moment that she touched it the goose screamed, and Peter remembered what the little man had told him to say.

"Hold fast! hold fast! hold fast!" he cried; and the young lady's fingers stuck so fast to the goose that she could not let go. She screamed and tried her best to pull away; but Peter walked along and took no more notice of her at all.

The men who were standing in the yard laughed, for they thought that she was only making believe; but the stable boy, when he heard her cries, ran out into the road to see what was the matter.

"Oh, Tommy, Tommy!" cried the poor girl, "give me your hand and set me free from this horrid goose."

"Of course I will," said Tommy, and he seized the girl's hand. But at that very moment the goose screamed again, and Peter, without looking back, cried out:

"Hold fast! hold fast! hold fast!"

The stable boy could not let go of the girl's hand, but was obliged to follow after; and although he howled and tried to pull away, Peter walked steadily along and seemed not to notice him.

They soon came to a village where there were a

great many people out for a holiday. A circus show was about to open, and the clown was in the street doing some of his funny tricks. When he saw Peter and the girl and the stable boy passing by, he cried out:

"What's the matter there? Have three more clowns come to town?"

"I am no clown," cried the stable boy; "but this girl holds my hand so tight that I can't get away. Come, set me free, and I will do you as good a turn some day."

The clown, in his droll way, seized the stable boy by the string of his apron. The goose screamed, and Peter cried out:

"Hold fast! hold fast! hold fast!"

Of course the clown could not let go. But Peter walked on, and looked neither to the right nor to the left. When the people saw the clown trying to pull away, they thought he was only at his tricks again, and everybody laughed. Just then the Mayor of the village came walking up the street. He was a very grave, sober man who was never known to smile, and the clown's silly actions did not please him at all.

"What do you mean by grinning at me?" he said; and he seized the fellow's coat tail and tried to stop him. But at that moment the goose screamed, and Peter cried out:

"Hold fast! hold fast! hold fast!"

What could the Mayor do but follow Peter with the rest? For, try as hard as he would, he could not let go.

The wife of the Mayor, a tall, spare woman, was greatly vexed when she saw her husband marching along and hanging to the clown's coat tail. She ran after him and seized his free arm and tried her best to pull him away. The goose screamed, and Peter, without looking back, cried out:

"Hold fast! hold fast! hold fast!"

The good lady could not help herself. She had to walk along whether she would or not, and make the best of it. A great many people followed,

laughing and wondering, but none of them wanted to touch the Mayor's wife; for she kept her tongue going very fast, you may be sure.

In a little while, Peter came in sight of the King's palace. Just before reaching the gates he met a fine carriage drawn by four white horses; and in the carriage sat a young lady, as beautiful as a summer day, but with a sad and solemn look.

Peter and his train stepped aside to let the carriage pass, and just then the young lady looked out. When she saw the goose, and the funny way in which so many people had to walk behind it, she burst into a loud laugh. Then she ordered the coachman to stop, so that she might see better, and the longer she looked, the harder she laughed.

"The Princess has laughed! The Princess has laughed!" cried all the servants that were with her; and one of them ran back to tell the King about it.

When the King heard what had happened he was so delighted that he ran out to see and hear for himself; and when he saw Peter and his train he was so amused that he laughed louder than anybody else.

"My good friend," he said to Peter, "which will you choose?"

Peter stared at him and said nothing, for he did not know what the King meant.

"Do you know what I promised to the one who would make my daughter laugh?" said the King.

"No, I don't think I do," said Peter.

"I promised a thousand dollars or a piece of land," said the King. "Which will you choose?"

"I think I'll take the land," said Peter.

Then he stroked the goose's head, and in a moment the girl and the stable boy and the clown and the Mayor and the Mayor's wife were free. They were so glad to get away that they ran home as though a fire were behind them.

"What a pretty bird!" said the Princess as she stepped out of her carriage and came to look at the goose. Then she reached out her pretty white hand to stroke its neck. The goose screamed, and Peter cried out:

"Hold fast! hold fast! hold fast!"

And the Princess thought that Peter was the handsomest lad she had ever seen. The King, too, was pleased with him and gave him a fine suit of clothes, and took him into the palace to be a page and wait on the ladies at the table.

When Peter grew up to be a strong and handsome man, he became a brave knight; and he and the Princess were married. But the goose flew up into the air and winged its way back to the forest, and nobody has seen it from that day to this.

TWO FOOLISH BIRDS.

A Blackbird looked into a dovecote one day and saw how happy and well-fed the Doves seemed to be. He thought that if he were only a Dove he would have a very easy life of it. So he painted himself white and went into the dovecote to live. He did very well so long as he kept his mouth shut; but as soon as he tried to speak or to sing, the Doves found him out and drove him away.

Then, in great distress, he flew back to his old home in the woods. But the Blackbirds who had once been his friends did not know him and would not let him come among them. So, in trying to get into better company than his own, he was left without any companions at all.

I once heard of a Bluejay who was even more foolish than the Blackbird. The Bluejay happened to find some bright peacock's feathers in the barnyard, and being very vain he stuck them in his wings and tail.

"How fine I am!" he said; and he looked back at himself and tried to strut like a Peacock. "No more living with the Jays for me. I'm too big a bird for that."

But the Peacocks only laughed at him; and when at last he tried to go back to his mates they would have nothing to do with him.

THE LION'S SHARE.

One day a Lion, a Fox, and an Ass went out hunting together and agreed to divide the spoils. In the evening all the game was placed in a heap, and the Lion asked the Ass to divide it. The honest fellow divided it very carefully into three equal parts, and asked each one to choose his part. This did not please the Lion; it made him so angry that he flew at the Ass and killed him.

"Now," said he to the Fox, "there are only two of us. See if you can divide this game properly between us."

The Fox did as he was bidden, and put all the game, except a mere mouthful, into one pile for the Lion.

"This is your share," he said.

"You are very kind," said the Lion, greatly pleased. "Who showed you how to do such things so well?"

"The dead Ass, who lies there," answered the Fox.

TOM TIT TOT.

THERE was once a woman, and she baked five pies all in the same day. But when she took the pies out of the oven the crust was hard, for she had left them there too long. So she said to her daughter Jane:

"Jane, take these pies and put them on the shelf, and let them stand there till they are fit to eat. They'll come round all right in a little while." She meant that the crust would get good and soft.

Now, the girl was not so wise as she might have been, and when the pies had stood a while she thought she would see if they were fit to eat. So she took a bite first of one and then of another till they were all gone.

"I guess mother won't care," she said; "for how else could I tell how long to let them stand there

When supper time came the good mother said: "Jane, go and fetch one of those pies. I dare say they've come round all right by this time."

The girl went and looked on the shelf. The empty plates were there, and that was all. Soon she came back with a very long face, and said: "They have not come round yet, mother."

"Not one of them?" said the mother.

"No, not one of them," said she.

"Well, come round or not come round," said the mother, "I must have one for supper."

"But you can't," said the girl.

"Yes I can," said the woman. "I've made up my mind to eat one of them, crust or no crust. So, go back and fetch me the best one of the five."

"Best or worst," said the girl, "you can't have it. I ate them all up so as to see whether they had stood long enough on the shelf."

The woman was vexed so much that she could not think what to do; for the girl was old enough to know better. When supper was over, the mother went and sat on the doorstep to spin; and as she span she made up a little song and sang it:

"My daughter she ate five, five pies to-day.
My daughter she ate five, five pies to-day!"

She did not know that the King was coming down the street, much less that he was quite close to the house — so close that he heard her singing. He could hear the tune, but he could not quite make out the words. So he stopped by the door, and said:

"What were you singing just now, my good woman?"

"Oh, a little song that I made up," she said.

"Sing it to me," said the King.

The woman did not like to tell the King how silly the girl had been, and so she sang:

"My daughter she span five, five skeins to-day.
My daughter she span five, five skeins to-day!"

"Did she?" cried the King. "I never heard of a girl that could spin so many skeins in one day. Any girl who is smart enough to do that ought to be the wife of the best man in the land."

He walked on a little way, and then he came back.

"Look here," he said; "I'm the best man in the land, and I want a wife; and so she shall marry me."

"Well, she might do worse," said the woman; and anybody could see that she was pleased.

"But let me tell you," said the King: "for eleven

months in the year, I will give her all the food she wants to eat, and all the fine things she wants to wear, and all the company she wants to have. But the last month of the year, she'll have to spin five skeins every day; and if she doesn't — why, I'll take her head off."

"All right!" said the woman, "you may have her, and welcome."

For she thought what a grand match that would be; and as for the spinning, there would be time enough to talk about that after a while, — the King would forget all about it before eleven months had passed.

The next day the King and Jane were married; and for eleven months the young Queen had all the food she could eat, and all the fine clothes she could wear, and all the company she wanted. But towards the last she began to think about the five skeins, and she wondered if the King still had them in mind. He had not said a word about them, and she hoped that he had forgotten.

But he had not forgotten. On the last day of the last month he took her into a room which she had never seen before; and there was nothing in it but a spinning wheel and a stool.

"Now, my dear Jane," he said, "you will be shut in here to-morrow, with a bite of something to eat,

and some flax; and if you don't spin five skeins before night, your head will go off." And then he went out and left her.

Poor Jane did not know what to do. She had been such a good-for-naught that she had not learned how to spin; and now what was to be done? She sat down on the stool, and, oh dear! how she did cry!

All at once she heard a sort of knock low down on the door: tap, tap, tap! She wiped the tears from her face, and then got up and opened the door. When she looked out, whom should she see but a queer little black elf with a long, slim tail. The elf looked up at her with an odd smile, and said:

"Jane, what makes you cry so hard?"

Jane was vexed, and she said: "What's that to you?"

"Never mind what it is to me," said the little old elf; "but tell me what makes you cry so hard."

"It won't do me any good if I do tell you," she said.

"You don't know how much good it may do you," said the elf; and he twirled his long tail round and round over his head.

She looked at his queer old face, and thought that maybe he could help her. So she said: "If it

won't do any good, it won't do any harm;" and then she told him all about the pies and the skeins and the King and everything else.

"And so that is what makes you cry so hard, is it?" said the elf. "But, see here! I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll come to your window every morning, and get the flax; and at night I'll bring the skeins to you."

"How much will you charge?" she asked.

The elf said: "If you can guess my name I won't charge anything. I will let you guess three times every night, and if you don't guess it by the time the month is gone, I will carry you off to my dark cave in the mountain. What do you say to that?"

She felt sure that she could guess the elf's name before the month was gone, and so she said: "All right! That is fair enough. Come to-morrow, and get your flax."

"All right!" said the elf; and, oh dear! how he did twirl his long tail!

The next morning as soon as it was light, the King led poor Jane to the room; and there was the flax and a bite of food.

"Now, my dear Jane," he said, "here is your wheel and here is your flax. If you fail to have five skeins spun before I come to see you to-night,

you'll lose your head." Then he went out and locked the door behind him.

Jane sat down on the stool and cried louder than before. Then she heard a tap on the window: tac, tac, tac!

She jumped up and opened it, and there was the little old elf on the window sill.

"Where is the flax?" he said.

"Here it is," said Jane; and she gave it to him, and dried her tears.

In the evening she heard a tap on the window again: tac, tac, tac! She jumped up and looked out, and there was the little old elf with five skeins of flax yarn on his arm.

"Here they are!" he said; and he gave them to her. "Now guess my name."

"Is it Bill?" she asked.

"No!" he said; and he twirled his tail.

"Is it Ned?" This was her second guess.

"No, it is not," he said; and he twirled his tail.

"Is it Mark?" This was her third guess.

"Ha! ha! not a bit of it," he said; and he twirled his tail very fast, and then flew away.

When the King came in, a little while after, there were the five skeins, all ready for him. "I see that you've saved your head this time," he said; "but to-morrow we will try it again."

Every day the flax was brought to her; and every morning and evening the elf came. Jane sat all day long trying to think of new names to say to him when he brought the skeins home in the evening. And as the days went by, the elf seemed to feel very happy, and he twirled his tail faster and faster every time she guessed.

The last day but one came. The elf brought the skeins at night, and when he gave them to her he laughed.

"Well, Jane," he said, "can't you guess my name to-night?"

"Is it Daniel?" she asked.

"No!" he said.

"Is it Zedekiah?"

"No! no!"

"Oh, then, is it Methusaleh?"

"No! no! no!"

The elf winked and grinned, and then said: "To-morrow is the last day. Did you know it?" He twirled his tail very fast, and flew away.

Jane sat down and thought she would cry. But just then she heard the King at the door, and she kept back her tears.

The King came in, and when he saw the five skeins he said: "It's all right, Jane. You've got the best man in the land, and he is proud of you. To-morrow you will spin the last of the skeins, and then you shall be free. I think I will eat my supper with you now."

So the servants brought in the supper and another stool for him, and the two sat down to eat.

The King had hardly eaten a mouthful, when he stopped and began to laugh; and he laughed so

hard that his face got red, and Jane thought he would choke.

"What is it that makes you laugh so hard?" she said.

"I was thinking of something," he said, as soon as he could get his breath. "I was out in the woods to-day, and I saw the funniest thing you ever heard tell of. It was out close to the mountains where I had never been before. There was a deep pit among the rocks, and a little cave at the bottom on one side, — the queerest place you ever saw. As I was going past it I heard something say, 'Hum, hum, hum, hum,' and I wondered what it was. I went on tiptoe to the edge of the pit and peeped over; and what do you think I saw down there?"

"I'm sure I can't guess," said Jane.

"It was the queerest little black elf that you ever set your eyes on," said the King. "It was the kind that live in the mountains, you know, and that never let anybody see them. But the funny part of it was that he had a little spinning wheel down there, and he was spinning — hum, hum, hum, hum, — as fast as he could, and twirling his long tail just as fast as the wheel went round; and while he span, he sang the drollest little song:

"Nimmy, nimmy, not —
My name is Tom Tit Tot."

And then the King fell back on his stool and laughed, and laughed, and laughed.

As for Jane, she was so glad that she wanted to scream. But she was wiser now than when she ate those pies; so she laughed just as the King laughed, and did not say a word.

Next morning when the elf came for the flax, he was so proud and so full of spite that you would have been afraid of him. "This is the last time," he said, as Jane gave him the flax.

"Yes," said she, "and I am glad of it."

"I'll carry you off to-night," he said.

When night came, there he was, tapping at the window. Jane opened it, and he came right in.

Oh, how he did grin! and oh, oh, oh! how fast his long tail did twirl round! He gave her the skeins, and then he said, as cross as could be:

"What's my name?"

"Is it Solomon?" she said; and she made believe that she was afraid.

"Ha! ha! No, of course not," he said, and he hopped down and strutted round the room.

"Well, then, is it Alexander?" she asked; and now she was all in a tremble.

"He! he! he!" he cried; "I should think not!" And he reached out his arms towards her, and twirled his tail so fast that it looked like a ring of fire.

She took a step back, and looked straight into his queer little eyes. Then she pointed her finger at him, and said:

"Nimmy, nimmy, not—
Your name is Tom Tit Tot!"

When the elf heard that, he just slunk away and flew out into the dark; and Jane never saw him again as long as she lived.

THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

THERE was once a Dog who lay all day long in a manger where there was plenty of hay. A Horse, a Cow, a Sheep, and a Goat came one by one and wanted to eat the hay. The Dog growled at them and would not let them have so much as a mouthful. Then an Ox came and looked in, but the Dog growled at him also.

"You selfish fellow," said the Ox; "you cannot eat the hay. Why do you want to keep it all to yourself?"

THE CAMEL AND HIS MASTER.

One night a Camel looked into the tent where his master was lying and said:

"Kind master, will you not let me put my head inside of the door? For the wind blows very cold to-night."

"Oh, yes," said the Man. "There is plenty of room."

So the Camel moved forward and stretched his head into the tent. "Ah!" he said, "this is what I call comfort."

In a little while he called to his master again. "Now if I could only warm my neck also," he said.

"Then put your neck inside," said his master, kindly. "You will not be in my way."

"The Camel did so, and for a time was very well contented. Then, looking around, he said: "If I could only put my forelegs inside I would feel a great deal better."

His master moved a little and said: "You may put your forelegs and shoulders inside, for I know that the wind blows cold to-night."

The Camel had hardly planted his forefeet within the tent when he spoke again:

"Master," he said, "I keep the tent open by standing here. I think I ought to go wholly within."

"Yes, come in," said the Man. "There is hardly room for us both, but I do not want to keep you out in the cold."

So the Camel crowded into the tent. But he was no sooner inside than he said: "You were right when you said there was hardly room for us both. I think it would be better for you to stand outside and so give me a chance to turn round and lie down."

Then, without more ado, he rudely pushed the Man out at the door, and took the whole tent for himself.

CINDERELLA; OR, THE LITTLE GLASS SLIPPER.

A VERY long time ago there lived a fair young girl with her father and mother in a beautiful home in the city. She was as happy as she was good, and she had all that heart could wish. But, by and by, a sad day came, and then many sad days. Her mother fell sick and died; and then, some time after, her father married again, for he said that his daughter must have some one to take care of her.

After that everything went wrong. The new mother was very cross and unkind; and she had two daughters of her own who were as cross and unkind as herself. They were harsh and cruel to our fair young girl and made her do all the hard work about the house.

She swept the floors and scrubbed the stairs and washed the dishes and cleaned the grates, while her two sisters sat in the parlor or lay asleep on their soft beds. They slept in fine rooms where there were long looking-glasses in which they could see themselves from head to foot; but she was sent to lie on an old pile of straw in the attic where there was only one chair, and no looking-glass at all.

When her day's work was done, they did not allow her to come into the parlor, but made her sit in the chimney corner in the kitchen among the ashes and cinders. This is why they nicknamed her Cinderella, or the cinder maid. But, for all her shabby clothes, she was handsomer by half than they could ever be.

Now it happened that the King's son gave a ball, and he invited all the fine rich people in the city to come to it. Of course, Cinderella's sisters were to go; and they were very proud and happy, for they thought that perhaps the Prince would dance with them. As for Cinderella, it only meant more work

for her; she must help her sisters get their fine dresses ready, and she must iron their laces and ribbons, and starch their linen, and put their ruffles in order. For days and days they talked of nothing but clothes.

"I am going to wear my blue velvet dress, and trim it with point lace," said the elder.

"And I am going to wear my pink satin, with diamonds and pearls," said the younger.

And then they began to quarrel; and they would have fought, I do believe, if Cinderella had not tried to make peace between them.

In the evening, while she was helping them with their hair, the elder said:

"Cinderella, don't you wish you were going to the ball to-night?"

"Ah, you are only laughing at me," she said. "It is not for me to go to so fine a place as that."

"You are right," said her sister. "Folks would think it very funny to see such a creature as you at a ball. The best place for you is among the ashes."

The sisters had laced themselves very tightly, for they wanted to look thin and slender; and they had eaten scarcely anything for two days. It is no wonder, then, that they were more ill-tempered that night than they had been before; and they scolded

and fretted and frowned until there was no getting along with them at all. But Cinderella was as sweet and kind as ever, and seemed to take all the more pains to make them look handsome.

At last the coach stopped at the door; they hurried out, and climbed into it; and then they were whirled away to the ball.

As for Cinderella, she sat down by the kitchen fire and cried.

All at once a fairy stood before her and asked her what was the matter.

"I wish I could — I wish I could —" and that was all that Cinderella could say for weeping and sobbing.

"I know," said the fairy. "You want to go to the ball, don't you?"

"Y-yes," cried Cinderella; and then she sobbed harder than ever.

"Well," said the fairy, "I know you are a good girl, and I think we can manage it." Then she said, "Run into the garden and fetch me a pumpkin."

Cinderella did not stop to ask why, but ran out and soon brought in the finest pumpkin that she could find. The fairy scooped out the inside of it, and then struck it with her wand.

What a strange thing happened then! Before you could snap your fingers, the pumpkin was

changed into a fine coach gilded all over and lined with red satin.

"Now fetch me the mouse trap from the pantry," said the fairy.

Cinderella did so; there were six fat mice in it. The fairy lifted the trap door, and, as the mice

came out one by one, she touched them with her wand. You would have laughed to see how quickly they were changed into fine black horses.

"But what shall we do for a coachman, my Cinderella?" said the fairy.

"Maybe there is a rat in the rat trap," said Cinderella. "We might make a coachman of him."

"You are right," said the fairy; "go and see!"

Cinderella soon brought the rat trap, and in it there were three big rats. The fairy chose the finest one among them and touched him with her wand; and, quick as a flash, he became the fattest, jolliest coachman that you ever saw.

"Now, go into the garden," said the fairy, "and you will find six gray lizards behind the watering pot. Bring them to me."

She had no sooner done so than the fairy touched them with her wand and turned them into six footmen, who stood in waiting behind the coach as if they had been footmen all their lives.

"Now then, my Cinderella," said the fairy, "now you can go to the ball."

"What! In these clothes?" said Cinderella; and she looked down at her ragged frock and began to sob again.

The fairy laughed, and touched her with her wand. You should have seen what happened then. Her clothes were turned into the finest cloth of gold and silver, all beset with rich jewels; and on her feet were glass slippers, the prettiest that ever were seen.

"Now, my Cinderella," said the fairy, "you must be off at once. But remember that if you stay a moment after midnight, your carriage will be a

pumpkin again, and your coachman a rat, and your horses mice, and your footmen lizards, and yourself a ragged little cinder maid."

Then Cinderella stepped into her coach, the coachman cracked his whip, and away she was whirled to the ball.

Somebody had told the King's son that a beautiful Princess whom nobody knew was coming; and so, when the coach stopped at the palace door, there he was, ready to help her out. He led her into the hall, and all the fine people who were there stood aside to let her pass. Nobody could help looking at her. "Ha! how handsome she is! Ha! how handsome she is!" said one to another.

The King himself, old as he was, whispered to the Queen that he had never seen so fair a maiden; and all the ladies were busy looking at her clothes and planning how they would make theirs after the same pattern. Then the music struck up, and the King's son led her out to dance with him; and she danced with so much modesty and grace that everybody thought her more lovely than before.

By and by a fine supper was served, but the young Prince could not eat a mouthful, he was so busy thinking of her. Cinderella went and sat down by her sisters, and was very civil and kind to them; and this made them proud and glad, for

they did not know her, and they thought it a grand thing to be noticed by so fine a lady.

While she was talking to them she heard the clock strike a quarter to twelve, and she remembered what the fairy had told her about staying till midnight. So she made haste to bid the King and Queen good night, and then, getting into her coach, she was driven home.

She met the fairy at the door and thanked her for her kindness; and the good fairy told her that she might go the next night to the Queen's ball, to which the Prince had invited her.

A few minutes later, the two sisters came home and found Cinderella sitting in the chimney corner, rubbing her eyes and seeming to be very sleepy.

"Ah, how long you have stayed!" she said.

"Well, if you had been there you would have stayed as long," said one of the sisters. "The prettiest Princess that you ever saw was there; and she talked with us and gave us bonbons."

"Who was she?" asked Cinderella.

"That's just what everybody would like to know," said the elder, whose name was Charlotte.

"Yes, the King's son would give the world to know who she is," said the younger, whose name was Caroline.

"I wish I could see her," said Cinderella. "Oh, dear Miss Charlotte, won't you let me go to-morrow? And, Miss Caroline, won't you lend me your yellow dress to wear?"

"What, lend my yellow dress to a cinder maid!" cried Caroline. "I'm not so foolish as that!" And the two sisters went proudly to their rooms.

The next night came, and the two sisters were at the ball, and so was Cinderella; and everybody thought her more beautiful than before. "Now remember twelve o'clock," were the fairy's last words when she started.

The young Prince was very kind to her, and time flew fast. The dancing was delightful, and the supper was fine, and nobody thought of being tired. But, before she had stayed half as long as she wished, Cinderella heard the clock begin to strike twelve. She rose up and ran from the room like a wild deer. The Prince followed her; but when he reached the street he saw nobody there but a ragged little cinder girl whom he would not have touched for the world.

Cinderella reached home, tired, frightened, and cold, without carriage, coachman, or footman; nothing was left of all her finery but one of her little glass slippers; the other she had dropped in the King's hall as she was running away.

When the two sisters came home, Cinderella asked them if they had had a good time at the ball, and if the pretty Princess had been there.

"Yes," they told her; "but when it struck twelve she ran away without bidding anybody good night; and she dropped one of her little glass slippers in the hall — the prettiest slipper that anybody ever saw. The King's son picked it up and put it into his pocket, as though it was the rarest treasure in the world. But nobody could find out which way the Princess went."

Cinderella climbed up the stairs to her wretched bed in the attic; and the next day she was at work, sweeping and scrubbing, as hard as ever.

And now, what do you think happened next? The King's son sent men with trumpets all through the land to invite every young lady to try the little glass slipper; and he declared that he would marry the one whose foot the slipper would just fit.

Of course, hundreds and hundreds of young ladies tried it; but their feet were ever and ever so much too big. You would have laughed to see the two sisters try it, and to hear their sighs when they had to give it up. Cinderella was very much amused, for she knew all the time that it was her slipper.

"Let me see if it will fit me," she said at last.

"What, you? Bah!" cried Charlotte, laughing.

"Go into the kitchen and clean the grates," said Caroline; and both of them tried to keep her from touching the slipper.

But the man who had been sent with the slipper said that he had orders to let every maiden in the land make the trial. So Cinderella sat down on a three-legged stool, and he put the slipper on her foot, and it fitted her as if it had been made of wax. And then she drew from her pocket the other slipper, and put it on her other foot.

At the same moment, in came the fairy with her wand; and she touched Cinderella, and she was no longer a cinder maid but a beautiful young lady clad in silk and satin.

And now the two sisters found that she was the pretty Princess whom they had seen at the ball; and they threw themselves at her feet to ask pardon for the unkind way in which they had treated her. She lifted them up kindly, and said that she forgave them, and wished them always to love her.

Some time afterwards, the young Prince and Cinderella were married; and they lived together happily for many, many years. As for the two sisters, Cinderella gave them rooms in the palace; and they left off their cross, ugly ways, and by and by became the wives of two rich dukes who were friends of the Prince.

THE MOUSE AND THE LION.

A Lion one day put his paw upon a Mouse who was picking up some crumbs that he had dropped.

"Oh, please, sir, don't kill me!" cried the little animal. "If you will only spare my life, I will do as much for you some time."

The Lion smiled, and let him go.

Not long after that some hunters spread a net in the woods in such a way that the Lion ran into it and could not get out. The more he struggled and tried to free himself the closer were the strong cords drawn around him. He knew that if he stayed there till morning the hunters would find him and kill him.

The Mouse heard him roar and ran to his aid.

"Lie still a while and I will help you," he said.

Then he set to work with his sharp teeth and soon gnawed the net in pieces.

"You laughed at me once," he said, "as if you thought I was too little to do you a good turn. But have I not done as I promised?"

THE FOX AND THE CRANE.

"Come and dine with me to-day," said the Fox to the Crane.

"Thank you," said the Crane; "I will do so with pleasure."

But after the dinner she was as hungry as before. All that the Fox had offered her was some thin soup in a shallow plate. With her long, sharp bill it was as much as she could do to get a taste, while the Fox with his broad tongue quickly lapped it all up.

"Come and dine with me to-morrow," said the Crane.

"Thank you," said the Fox; "I will do so with pleasure."

He went in great glee, but he came home sad. The Crane had offered him plenty of good food, but had served it in tall, narrow-necked bottles. With his broad tongue he could not get so much as a taste, while the Crane with her long, sharp bill easily reached and ate up the whole of it.

PRINCET AND THE GOLDEN BLACKBIRD.

In a strange land far over the sea there once lived a very rich Earl who had three sons. Now it happened that this Earl fell sick, and not one of the doctors in all that country was wise enough to tell what ailed him or to do anything that would make him feel better. At last there came a wise man from the other side of the great blue mountains, who seemed to know all about the case; and he said that nothing in the world could save the Earl's life except the wonderful Golden Blackbird which lived in the land of Nobody-knows-where.

The Earl at once called to his eldest son and bade him go and look for the Golden Blackbird; and he promised him great riches if he would find it and bring it back with him.

The young man started out very gaily, for he thought it would be fine sport to go into the woods and pick a golden blackbird off the first tree he came to. He traveled on without seeing anybody, and came at last to a place where four roads met. There were no signboards there, and so he was a long time making up his mind which road to take.

"I suppose that they all lead to the land of Nobody-knows-where," he said; "but I should like to take the shortest cut, for I am getting tired."

Then he shut his eyes and threw his hat high into the air, and when it fell he took the road which was nearest to it. He followed this road for two or three days, seeing plenty of trees but not a single blackbird. At last he came to an inn where there were several young men of his own age, eating and drinking.

"Where are you going, sir?" asked the landlord.

"To Nobody-knows-where," answered he.

"Then come in and rest a little while," said the landlord.

"Yes, come in and rest a little while," said all the guests.

The young man went inside with the merry-makers, and was in no haste to come out again.

"Why should I spend my time in hunting for a blackbird?" he said to himself. "If I should find it, I would only get what I am sure to have as soon as my father dies."

And he stayed in the inn.

After waiting a long time, the sick Earl called his second son and bade him go and find the Golden Blackbird. The youth started out in the same direction which his brother had taken, and when he came to the cross-roads he threw up his cap to find out which way he should go.

The cap fell in the same place, and the youth took the same road. After traveling until he was very tired, he came to the same inn, and saw his brother among the merry guests who were eating and drinking within.

"Come in and rest a little while," said the landlord.

"Yes, come in and rest a little while," said the young man, his brother.

He was not slow to do as they asked him, and he was in no hurry to begin his journey again.

"Why should we bother about the Golden Blackbird?" said the brothers. "If our father dies, we shall both be rich; for we will divide the property between us."

And they stayed at the inn until all their money was gone; and then they stayed until they had gotten so deeply in debt that the landlord would not let them go, but held them as prisoners until they should pay him.

After a while the sick Earl called to his youngest son, whose name was Princet, and bade him go and find the Golden Blackbird. Princet started out at once, and in three or four days came to the inn where his brothers were staying. They tried hard to get him to stop.

"What is the use of hunting for that blackbird?"

they said. "Come in, and let us have a good time; and when our father dies we'll divide the property."

But Princet shook his head.

"My father trusted me," he said; "and I will go all over the world to find the Golden Blackbird. So, don't ask me to stop."

The young men laughed at him and called him names, but he went on.

One day, after he had been traveling for a long time, he met a White Rabbit, who stopped to look at him and said:

"Good morning, my laddie! Where are you going?"

"I am on my way to Nobody-knows-where," answered Princet. "I want to find the Golden Blackbird and fetch him home to cure my father, who is sick."

"You have a long way to go," said the White Rabbit; "for it is at least seven hundred miles to the place where the Golden Blackbird sits."

"Oh, dear!" cried Princet. "How can I ever travel so far?"

"Get on my back, and I'll carry you," said the White Rabbit.

Princet did so, and the White Rabbit started at once for the land of Nobody-knows-where. At each leap he went seven miles, and in a little while they

came in sight of a white castle with golden towers, more beautiful than anything Princet had ever seen before.

"I will leave you here," said the White Rabbit.

"But where is the Golden Blackbird?" asked the lad.

"There is a little log hut in the wood close by the castle," answered the White Rabbit; "and in the log hut there is a golden bird cage; and, sitting on a perch close beside the bird cage, you will find the Golden Blackbird. When you take the Blackbird do not put him in the cage, for then the people of the castle will think you are trying to steal him. But you will not be stealing him; for the law of the land says that he belongs to any one who can take him."

Princet hurried away to the log hut, and there he saw the Golden Blackbird sitting just as the White Rabbit had said. But the bird was stiff and cold, and seemed to be dead, and this troubled Princet very much.

"If I could only put him into the cage," said he, "maybe he would come to life again."

As soon as the Golden Blackbird touched the bars of the cage, he opened his eyes and began to sing so loudly that everybody in the castle rushed out to see what was the matter.

"The lad is trying to steal the Golden Blackbird," cried the servants.

"I am not trying to steal him," said Princet; "but my father is very sick, and if I may carry the Blackbird to him, he will get well."

"All right!" they answered. "You may have the Golden Blackbird, if you will find the Porcelain Maiden and bring her to this place."

"But who is the Porcelain Maiden, and where is she?" he asked.

"That is what you are to find out," said they; and they drove him out of the log hut and slammed the door behind him.

As he was going through the wood, feeling very sad, the White Rabbit met him.

"What is the matter, my laddie?" he asked.

"They will not let me have the Golden Blackbird unless I find the Porcelain Maiden and bring her to them," said Princet.

"Foolish boy," said the White Rabbit; "if you had only done what I told you, this would not have happened. The Golden Blackbird doesn't belong to the people of the castle, but to the first one who is wise enough to carry him away. If you had not put him into the golden cage, he would have kept still, and you might have carried him away; and then he would have been rightfully your own."

"But what about the Porcelain Maiden?" cried Princet.

"Ah, yes! The Porcelain Maiden sits on a shelf in the Queen's pantry, two hundred miles from here. She is very pretty, but she is deaf and dumb. If you can only make her sing, she will lose her deafness and come with you."

"I will try," said Princet; "but how am I to find her?"

"Get on my back, and I'll carry you to her," said the White Rabbit.

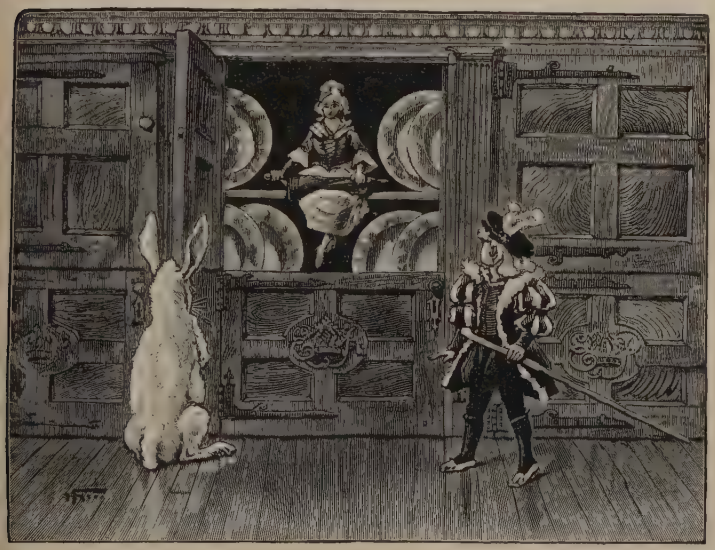
Away he went, leaping seven miles at every leap, and in half an hour they were close by a beautiful palace.

Princet looked through the open doors and saw many costly and wonderful things.

"This is the Queen's china pantry," said the White Rabbit, "and there is the Porcelain Maiden sitting on the top shelf. When you carry her back to the castle, don't be foolish. Remember that the Golden Blackbird is yours if you are wise enough to carry him away. So take him in one hand and the golden cage in the other, and walk away with them. You have the right to do this, and nobody will hinder you. Good by."

Princet was sorry to see the White Rabbit hop away, but he was gone before he could speak. All

this time the Porcelain Maiden sat on her shelf and looked straight before her, for she had not heard a word. Princet thought that she was the prettiest little lady he had ever seen. But how was he going



to make her sing? All at once he leaped through the door of the pantry, and screamed:

"Booh!"

This so startled the Porcelain Maiden that she lost her balance and came tumbling down from her shelf to the floor. As soon as her feet touched the floor, she began to sing:

"Ta-ra-ra-boom-te-ay!"

And there she stood before Princet, as pretty as any princess and ten times more charming.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I am Princet," he answered, "and I want you to go with me to get the Golden Blackbird to take to my father, who is very sick."

"Certainly I will go with you," she said.

But it was two hundred miles back to the castle, and the Porcelain Maiden could not walk so far; so Princet bought a little horse for her to ride upon, and then they sped through the woods at a wondrous rate.

When at last they reached the little log hut close to the white castle, there sat the Golden Blackbird, stiff and cold, on his perch, and the golden cage hung empty on the wall. Princet was not going to be foolish this time. He took the bird in one hand and the cage in the other, and walked away with them; and the Porcelain Maiden sat on her little horse, and rode merrily along behind him.

"Now my father will soon be well again," said Princet; and the seven hundred miles did not seem to be more than seven, he was so happy.

One evening they came to an inn by the roadside.

"Come in and rest a little while," said the landlord.

"Yes, come in and rest a little while," said two young men who were looking out from a window above.

"No, I will not," said Princet; "my father is very sick, and I am taking the Golden Blackbird to him; for it is the only thing in the world that can cure him."

"Ah! is it you, little Princet?" said his brothers. "What a lucky fellow you are!" And then they begged him to pay their debts and set them free.

Of course, Princet could not leave them there; and so he paid their debts, and all started homeward together.

But the two elder brothers were angry because they had not found the Golden Blackbird themselves; and as they were going along the bank of a river they seized Princet and threw him into the water. They were quite sure that he could never get out, and so they went on without looking back. One of them carried the bird and the cage, and the other led the little horse on which sat the Porcelain Maiden.

But Princet was not drowned. When he fell into the water, he sank to the very bottom. The next minute, however, he rose to the top and seized hold of some reeds which grew close to the bank. Then he began to shout for help as loud as he

could. Pretty soon the White Rabbit came running towards him.

"Seize hold of my leg," he cried, "and I will pull you out."

When Princet was safe on shore, the White Rabbit said:

"Now, my little laddie, since you have served your father so well, it is not right that your big brothers should treat you in this way. Dress yourself up as a stable boy and go and offer to work for your father. Things will turn out well for you if you are wise."

Then he bowed and hopped away, and Princet never saw him again.

It was not much trouble for the lad to make himself look like a stable boy. All he had to do was to swap clothing with the first plow boy he met; and then, after he had made his face very dirty, nobody would have known him. The next day he went to his father's palace and asked if a stable boy was wanted.

"Yes: we want a good one," said the coachman; "for the master's sons have just brought home a little horse that nobody can touch. He has already kicked the gardener and two stable boys almost to death; and unless something is done he will soon tear down the whole barn."

"I am not afraid of him," said Princet; and as soon as he went into the stable the little horse became as gentle as a lamb.

"That is very strange," said everybody.

"Perhaps he knows me," said Princet.

"If some one could only manage the Porcelain Maiden as well," said the master of the house, "we should all feel a good deal safer."

"The Porcelain Maiden? Who is she?" asked the lad.

"She is a pretty little lady whom the master's sons have just brought from the land of Nobody-knows-where," was the answer. "But she is a terror. She bites and scratches and screams all the time; and she has broken every piece of china in my lady's pantry. Unless something is done, she will soon tear down the whole house."

"I should like to see her," said Princet.

As soon as he went into the room where she was, the Porcelain Maiden ran towards him and began to laugh and sing. Then she courtesied gently to the company, and spoke to Princet in a way which was so becoming and sweet that everybody said she was the most perfect little lady in the world.

"How very strange!" said the master of the house.

At that moment the Golden Blackbird, who had been as stiff and cold as lead, flew down from his perch on the wall, and lighted on Princet's shoulder. Then he began to sing a most wonderful song.

"It seems that the Porcelain Maiden and the Golden Blackbird both know the stable boy," said the lords and ladies, who had come in from the breakfast room.

"Yes, and the Porcelain Maiden can tell the truth about it if she will," said Princet.

Then the Porcelain Maiden courtesied again, and told the whole story of Princet and the Golden Blackbird, just as I have told it to you. And while she was speaking, everybody listened, and the great room was so still that you could have heard a pin drop on the floor. And when she had finished, there was a clapping of hands, and then a great shout, and Princet's father walked into the room, feeling as well as he had ever felt in his life.

"Welcome, my own Princet!" he said.

Do you want to know what became of the elder brothers? Well, I will leave that for you to guess; but you may be sure that they got what they deserved. As for Princet and the Golden Blackbird and the Porcelain Maiden, they got what they deserved, too.

THE FOOLISH TORTOISE.

THERE was once a Tortoise who wanted to fly. So she went to an Eagle, who was sitting on a rock, and said:

"Good friend Eagle, teach me to fly through the air as you do."

But the Eagle said: "How can you fly? You have no wings."

"I am sure that I can learn," said the Tortoise. "Please teach me; for it seems very easy to you who know how it is done."

The Eagle was so much annoyed that he turned away and made no answer.

But the next day the Tortoise came back, and then again the next day, and the next and the next; and, every time, she made the same request, "Please teach me to fly! Please teach me to fly!"

At last the Eagle became so vexed that he said to the foolish creature: "All right! I will give you your first lesson now."

So he took the Tortoise in his claws, and flew

up with her into the air. When they were very high, the Eagle said:

"Now you shall fly!"

With these words he let go of the Tortoise. Of course she could not help herself. She fell straight down upon the rocks and was dashed in pieces.

THE ANT AND THE CRICKET.

A SILLY young Cricket, who did nothing but sing through the warm sunny months of summer and spring, was sadly surprised when he found that at home his cupboard was empty, and winter had come. Not a crumb could be found on the snow-covered ground; not a flower could he see; not a leaf on a tree.

"Oh, what will become," said the Cricket, "of me?"

At last the poor Cricket, by hunger made bold, all dripping with wet, and all trembling with cold, to the house of an Ant went begging for food.

"Dear Ant," he began, "will you not be so good as to help a poor fellow, who has nothing to eat? I want a coat for my back, and shoes for my feet, a shelter from the rain, and a mouthful of grain. I wish only to borrow, I will pay you to-morrow — without them I must die of hunger and sorrow."

Said the Ant to the Cricket, "Do you know, my good friend, that we Ants never borrow, we Ants never lend? But tell me, I pray, did you lay nothing by when the weather was warm?"

Said the Cricket, "Not I! My heart was so light that I sang day and night, for all things looked gay."

"You sang, sir, you say? Go then," said the Ant, "and dance winter away."

Then, slamming the door in the poor Cricket's face, he went and sat down in his warm, cozy place, and said: "I am sure I'd be very, very poor if I idled away every warm summer day; and I think that this rule is both right and good, he who lives without work must go without food."

PUSS IN BOOTS.

THERE was once a miller who had three sons; and he had nothing else in the world but his mill, an old donkey, and a cat. When he came to die it was not much trouble to divide the property. The eldest son took the mill, and the second son took the donkey; and so there was nothing left for the youngest son but the cat. It was rather a poor start for the young man, and instead of going to work as he ought to have done, he sat down and began to cry.

"What will become of me?" he said. "Jack and John can do well enough with the mill and the donkey, but what in the world can I do with nothing but a cat? I might kill him and eat him and sell his skin for a loaf of bread; but how long would that keep me alive?"

The cat had heard every word, and now came up and rubbed against his knee.

"My dear master," said the little beast, "if you only had what belongs to you, you would be as rich as the best of them."

The young man stroked the cat's back, and said: "Nothing belongs to me but you, my poor puss!"

"If you will only get me a strong game bag and

a pair of boots," said the cat, "I will show you some things that you do not know."

The young man had seen the cat at his tricks many times. He had seen him hide himself in the meal tub and then spring out at the rats which came there after something to eat; and he had seen him play that he was dead until the mice came out of their holes, and then, snap! dash! he had them all under his paw. But how were such tricks as those going to help matters now? The young man could not believe they would help at all; and yet, to please the cat, he borrowed a bag from his brother the miller, and went in debt for a pair of boots.

When Puss had drawn the boots upon his feet and hung the bag about his neck, he told his master to be brave, and trust him for the rest. Then he set off for a field where he knew there were a good many rabbits. As soon as he came to the field he sprinkled a little bran in the bottom of the bag and left the mouth of it wide open so as to tempt the rabbits to venture into it. Then he lay down upon the ground and shut his eyes as though he were asleep.

Soon a foolish young rabbit which was passing that way smelled the bran, and, being very hungry, hopped right into the bag. Puss drew the

strings quickly, and the fellow was caught safe and tight.

Now it so happened that the King's palace was only a little way off, and to it the cat went with the rabbit under his arm.

"Please, sir, I want to speak to the King," he said to the servant at the door.

The servant led him upstairs into the King's great hall, and there he saw the King himself with his crown on his head. The cat made a low bow and said:

"May it please your royal highness, I have brought you a rabbit which my master sends you as a token of his love."

"Your master! Who is he?"

"The Marquis of Carabas, sir," said the cat, and he bowed very low.

"Tell your master that I thank him," said the King; and Puss took his leave and went proudly home.

Two or three days after that, the cat went into the cornfield, and hid himself, with the mouth of the bag standing open. This time a brace of quails flew in, and he carried them to the King. The King again sent his thanks to the cat's master, and, what was almost as good, he gave a nice little present to the cat.

Things went on in this way for five or six months. Every few days Puss carried some game to the King, and the King wondered who in the world this Marquis of Carabas could be, who was so good at hunting.

One day Puss heard that the King and his daughters were going to drive along the road by the river, and he ran to speak to his master.

"The time has come for me to tell you a secret," he said.

"Tell it, then," said the young man.

"Well, you must know," said the cat, "that all the land on both sides of the river for the space of ten miles belongs to you."

"How is that?" asked his master.

"Years and years ago," said the cat, "your great-grandfather owned that land; and it ought to have gone to your grandfather, who was his third son, and then to your father, who was his third son, and then to you. But a wicked ogre who lives in a great castle beyond the forest cheated your great-grandfather and took it for his own. If you had your rights, you would be the Marquis of Carabas to-day; for that was the title which your great-great-grandfather held."

"But how am I to get my rights?" asked the young man. "If I should set up a claim for the

lands which you tell me about, everybody would call me mad."

"Do as I say," said the cat, "and you will be the luckiest man in the world. All you need to do is to go and bathe in the river where I tell you. I will manage the rest."

The young man did not believe a word of what the cat told him, and yet he promised that he would do as the cunning fellow wished. So, about noon, he walked down to the river and went in to bathe. While he was in the water the King and the pretty Princesses came driving by. The cat began at once to rush up and down the bank and to cry:

"Help! help! The Marquis of Carabas is in the water, and he'll drown if he doesn't get out. Save him! Save him!"

The King looked out of his carriage window and saw the cat. He knew it was the very same fellow that had brought him such good game; and so he ordered his men to run as quickly as they could and help the Marquis.

While they were hauling the cat's master out of the water, the cat came up to the carriage and told the King that while the Marquis was bathing a thief had come by and stolen his clothes. (The thief was none other than Puss himself, but he

was careful not to let anybody know it.) The King at once sent a man back to the palace to fetch one of his finest suits for the Marquis of Carabas.

And so it happened that when the young man at last climbed up the steep river bank and came where he could be seen by those in the carriage, he was dressed better than he had ever hoped to be. The young Princesses thought that he was a very handsome fellow; and the King, after greeting him kindly, bade him step into the carriage and take a drive with them.

The cat, who saw that things were turning out very much as he wished, now ran on before, while the King's carriage rattled briskly along the highway. Soon Puss came to a meadow where some men were mowing, and he said:

"Good haymakers, let me tell you something. The King is coming this way; and if he should ask you who owns this field, it will be safest to say 'The Marquis of Carabas.' I won't tell what may happen if you give him any other answer."

When the carriage came along, the King popped his head out of the window and asked:

"Who owns this grass land, my good fellows?"

"The Marquis of Carabas, your Majesty!" they answered, trembling for their lives.

"This is a fine meadow of yours," said the King to the young man.

"Yes, sir," he answered, "the grass grows here every year."

Meanwhile, the master-cat, who was still running on before, came to some reapers who were cutting wheat.

"Good reapers," he said, "let me tell you something. The King is coming this way in his carriage. When he sees you at work, he will be likely to ask you whose grain this is. Now you will save yourselves a good deal of trouble if you will say that it belongs to the Marquis of Carabas. There

is no telling what may happen to you if you give any other answer."

And then he scampered away and was soon out of sight.

The reapers looked at one another and shook their heads. "Maybe he's right," they said; "at any rate, we shall lose nothing by taking his advice. See! There comes the King, now."

"To whom does all this wheat belong?" asked the King, as his carriage was driven slowly past.

"To the Marquis of Carabas," answered the reapers, all speaking at once.

"My dear Marquis," said the King, turning to the young man by his side, "you are having some famous crops this year."

"It is a good season for crops," was the modest answer.

As Puss went proudly along in boots, he did not fail to warn everybody in the same way. "Let me tell you something," he would say; "be sure to say to the King that this belongs to the Marquis of Carabas. It will please the King and save you from a good deal of trouble."

The King was astonished. "My dear Marquis," he said, "I had no idea that your lands were so broad."

The young man smiled and made no answer.

After awhile they passed through a dark wood and saw a fine castle on the top of a hill. A rich and cruel ogre of whom everybody was afraid lived in the castle, and was the lord of all that part of the country. People said that he owned all the land on both sides of the river for miles and miles; but how he had gotten it, and by what right he held it, nobody could tell. He was also a magician, and could change himself into any form that he wished.

Puss stopped at the gate of the castle, and sent in word that he would like to speak with the ogre.

"A cat in boots!" cried the old fellow. "Oh, certainly. Let him come up and speak with me; but it may be a long time before he goes down again!" And he laughed, and showed his ugly teeth.

When Puss was led into the ogre's hall, he was surprised to see so savage a monster; but he went up to him and said:

"Sir Ogre, I have heard that you can change yourself into all sorts of animals, even into a lion or an elephant. But there are some people who don't believe it."

"Some people who don't believe it!" cried the ogre. "They'd better believe it. Just see me become a lion."

When the cat saw a lion so near him he was

scared almost to death, and ran into a corner, where he stayed till the lion became an ogre again. But, to tell the truth, the ogre was a good deal fiercer and uglier and more dangerous than the lion. Puss came out of his corner, trembling.

"Dear, dear!" he said, "what a terrible lion you were! It must be a good deal harder, however, to make yourself smaller — to turn into a mouse, for instance. Few people believe that you can do that."

"Pshaw!" said the ogre; "it is as easy to do one as the other!" And he changed himself into a mouse and ran back and forth on the floor.

Quick as thought Puss was upon him with teeth and sharp claws; and that was the last of the ogre.

A moment later Puss heard the noise of wheels rolling along the highway, and he hastened down to the gate. As the King's carriage drew near, he ran out to meet it, and said: "Welcome! Welcome to the castle of the Marquis of Carabas!"

"What! my lord Marquis," cried the King, "does this grand castle belong to you also? It is a fine building, indeed. I should like very much to see the inside of it."

The young man smiled. Then he said: "I should be very glad to see inside of it myself. Pray, come in with me." He gave his hand to the prettiest of

the three young Princesses, and the whole company went up the steps into the great feast hall.

"Welcome to the castle of the Marquis of Carabas!" cried all the servants. Puss in boots had seen them and told them what to do.

The King was amazed.

The long table was loaded with the choicest food, for the ogre had invited all the other ogres in the country to dine with him that day, and they were expected to come after a while. The young man and the King and the Princesses sat down to the feast. Everything was served in good style, and Puss in boots was first here, then there, seeing that nothing went amiss.

"I tell you, my dear Marquis," said the King, after having eaten the best dinner of his life: "let me whisper something in your ear. It will be your own fault if you don't become the King's son-in-law."

The three young Princesses blushed; and the young man did not know what to say. So he very wisely said nothing at all.

After that, Puss in boots had a pretty easy life of it; and he never caught any more mice except for fun.

And the young man really did become the King's son-in-law, for he married the youngest and prettiest of the three Princesses, and they lived happily in the great castle on the hill.

THE HARES.

THE Hares once had a meeting to talk about their troubles in life.

"We are always being frightened to death," said their captain. "Men and dogs and eagles and foxes keep us in such dread that we never have any pleasure. It would be better to put an end to our lives at once."

"Yes," said the others, "there is always something to make us afraid and unhappy. So, let us put an end to our lives at once."

And with that they all started on a fast run to the pond, for they thought that they would jump off a rock into the water and drown themselves.

Now it happened that several Frogs were sitting on the bank, and when they heard the Hares coming through the grass they were so frightened that they leaped one after another into the water.

"Stop!" cried the captain of the Hares. "Don't you see that the Frogs are afraid of us? They are worse off than we. Let us live a little longer."

DRAKESBILL AND HIS FRIENDS.

Drakesbill was very little, and that is why some people called him Bill Drake; but, tiny as he was, he knew a thing or two. He was a great worker and laid up every cent that he earned; and, long before he was half as tall as a gray goose, he had saved a hundred dollars in gold. The King of the country, who never did anything but spend money, heard that Drakesbill had some gold pieces, and he made haste to borrow them. How very kind and gracious he was until he heard the little yellow coins jingle in his pocket! And how proud it made Drakesbill feel to have it said that he had lent money to the King!

A year went by, — two years, three years, — and the King seemed to have forgotten him. He did not even offer to pay Drakesbill the interest, and the little fellow was very uneasy lest he should lose all his money. At last he made up his mind that he would go and see the King and tell him that he needed the gold pieces very much.

So, early one morning, Drakesbill, as spruce and fresh as a young robin, went down the high road towards the King's palace, singing, "Quack, quack, quack, when shall I get my money back?"

He had not gone far when he met friend Fox coming home from his rounds among the farm-yards.

"Good morning, my good neighbor," said friend Fox; "where are you going so early in the day?"

"I am going to the King to ask him to pay me what he owes me."

"Oh! take me with you!"

"One can't have too many friends," thought Drakesbill. Then he said, "Certainly I will take you; but you walk on four legs, and you will soon get tired. So make yourself very small, get into

my mouth, creep under my tongue — and I will carry you."

Friend Fox thanked him very kindly, made himself very small, and was out of sight like a letter in a letter box.

Then Drakesbill was off again, all spruce and fresh as a spring morning, and still singing, "Quack, quack, quack, when shall I get my money back?"

He had not gone far when he met his lady friend Ladder leaning against her wall. "Good morning, ducky darling," said the lady friend, "whither away, so bold and gay, this fine, new day?"

"I am going to the King to ask him to pay me what he owes me."

"Oh! take me with you!"

"One can't have too many friends," thought Drakesbill. Then he said, "Certainly I will take you; but you have such long wooden legs that you will soon get tired. So make yourself very small, get into my mouth, creep under my tongue — and I will carry you."

The Ladder thanked him, made herself very small, and went to keep company with friend Fox.

Then Drakesbill was off again, spruce and fresh as any dapper little dandy, and singing, "Quack, quack, quack, when shall I get my money back?"

He had not gone far when he met his sweetheart, laughing River, wandering quietly in the sunshine.

"Good morning, my spoon bill," she said, "whither do you go, so happy and slow, while the soft breezes blow?"

"I am going to the King, you know, for he owes me money, and I want him to pay me back."

"Oh! take me with you!"

"One can't have too many friends," thought Drakesbill. Then he said, "Certainly I will take you; but you always sleep while you run, and you will soon get tired. So make yourself very small, get into my mouth, creep under my tongue — and I will carry you."

The River thanked him very kindly, and then, glou! glou! glou! she went to take her place between friend Fox and friend Ladder.

And Drakesbill was off again, spruce and fresh as a busy bee, and singing "Quack, quack, quack, when shall I get my money back?"

A little farther on he met neighbor Wasp-nest, taking his wasps out for some fresh air.

"Good morning, neighbor Bill," said Wasp-nest; "whither do we run, so full of fun, in the bright, warm sun?"

"Oh, don't you know that the King owes me

money? And I am going down to see him and make him pay me," answered Drakesbill.

"Oh! take us with you!"

"One can't have too many friends," thought Drakesbill. Then he said, "Certainly I will take you; but there are so many of you that you will soon get tired. So make yourself quite small, get into my mouth, creep under my tongue — and I will carry you."

Neighbor Wasp-nest thanked him very kindly, and then buzz, buzz, buzz, file right! march! There wasn't much more room, but by getting close together everybody was made quite comfortable.

And then Drakesbill went on singing.

In the afternoon he came to the great city where the King lived; and as he marched straight up High Street, he sang as loud as he could, "Quack quack, quack! Oh, when shall I get my money back?"

When he came to the King's palace he climbed up the step; and then he stood on tip-toe, and knocked at the door, toc! toc! toc!

"Who's there?" asked the doorkeeper, looking out through the keyhole.

"'Tis I, Drakesbill. I want to speak with the King."

"Speak with the King? Nonsense. That is

easier said than done. The King is in the parlor counting out his money."

"That is just what I want to see him do," said Drakesbill. "Tell him I am here, and then he will know my business."

The doorkeeper went into the parlor to speak with the King. But he was not there; he was in the kitchen, just sitting down to dinner with a white napkin round his neck.

"Good! good!" said the King. "I know the rascal. Fetch him in and put him with the turkeys and chickens."

The doorkeeper went back to the door.

"Walk in, sir!"

"Good!" said Drakesbill to himself. "Now I can see how the folks eat at the King's table."

"This way, this way!" said the doorkeeper. "Now step through that gate. There you are!"

"What! In the poultry yard? How? What?"

How vexed the little fellow was! And no wonder.

"Just wait," he said at last. "I think I'll show them a thing or two. Quack, quack, quack, when shall I get my money back?"

But turkeys and chickens are queer things, as you know, and think themselves a good deal better than other folks. When they saw what a funny

little fellow had come among them, and when they heard him singing his queer song, they began to ask one another: —

"Who is he? What is he doing here?"

Then they all rushed upon him, and if he had not had his wits about him they would have pecked him to death in no time. But, as good luck would have it, he remembered his friend Fox, and he cried out: —

"Fox, friend Fox, from your hiding place
Come quick, or sad will be my case!"

Then friend Fox, who was only waiting for these words, leaped out from his hiding place, as big as life and as happy as a sunflower; and he threw himself on the wicked fowls, and snip, snap! crish, crash! he tore them in pieces; and at the end of five minutes not one of them was left alive. And Drakesbill, spruce and fresh as ever, began to sing again, "Quack, quack, quack, when shall I get my money back?"

But the King was very angry when the poultry woman and the cook and the doorkeeper all rushed into the kitchen where he was eating and told him what had happened. He ordered them to seize this naughty little Drakesbill, and throw him into the well, and thus make an end of him.

"I am lost! I am lost!" cried Drakesbill as he

fell fluttering down into the deep, dark hole. "I can never climb out of this place!"

Then he happened to think of his lady friend Ladder, and he sang: —

"Ladder, Ladder, from beneath my tongue
Come quick, or soon my song will be sung!"

Friend Ladder, who had only been waiting for these words, leaped quickly out, as tall as a flagpole and as charming as a walking stick; and she stood with her feet at the bottom of the well and her two arms resting upon the top; and Drakesbill climbed nimbly on her back, and hip! hop! hup! how soon he was up and singing louder than ever, "Quack, quack, quack, when shall I get my money back?"

The King, who was still at the table, heard him singing, and the song made him so angry that he almost choked.

"Can't anybody make that fellow hush?" he cried.

Then he ordered his men to build a great fire, and, when it was hot, to throw Drakesbill into it and burn him up for a wicked wizard.

But Drakesbill was not much afraid this time; he remembered his sweetheart River. Just when the flames were the highest, and the captain of the

King's men was going to toss him into them, he sang out: —

"River, River, outward flow,
Or into the fire I must go!"

Then friend River, who had only been waiting for these words, flowed quickly out, as strong as a storm and as swift as the wind; and she put out the fire, and drowned all the people that had kindled it; and, grou! grou! grou! she flowed into the King's palace and stood four feet deep in the great hall. And Drakesbill, spruce and fresh as ever, swam hither and thither, singing, "Quack, quack, quack, when shall I get my money back?"

Of course, after all this had happened, the King was more angry than he had ever been before; and when he saw Drakesbill swimming about so coolly, while he had to stand on the table to keep his feet dry, he could hardly hold himself.

"Bring the fellow here, and I'll finish him with the carving knife! bring him here quick!" he cried.

Two servants rushed out and seized Drakesbill very rudely. They dragged him towards the King, who was standing with drawn carving knife. The King's brave men with swords in their hands were all around him. "It is all over with me now," said

Drakesbill. "I don't see how I can live through this!"

But just then he thought of his neighbor Wasp-nest, and he cried out: —

"Wasp-nest, Wasp-nest, hither fly,
Or Drakesbill soon will have to die!"

Then Wasp-nest, who had been waiting for these words, began to wake up his wasps, and things changed very quickly.

"Buzz, buzz, buzz! Charge!" cried Wasp-nest. And the wasps rushed out and threw themselves upon the King and his brave men, and stung them so badly that they ran and jumped right out from the windows, and nobody in the palace ever saw them again.

As for Drakesbill, he could only sit still and wonder what was going to happen next. But after awhile he remembered his money, and began to sing as before. Then, as the house was very still, he thought that he might as well look round a little while; perhaps he would find his hundred yellow pieces of gold.

It was of no use, however. He peeped into all the corners and opened all the drawers. There was not a dollar in the house. The King had spent everything.

By and by Drakesbill found his way into the room where the King's throne stood, and as he was very tired, he sat down to rest among the cushions of velvet and gold.

When the people saw the King and his brave men running away from the wasps, they felt sure that they would never come back. So they crowded into the palace to see what was the matter. And the only person they found there was little Drakesbill sitting by himself on the throne. Then they all shouted: —

> "The King is dead! long live the King!
> How glad we'll be to be ruled by this thing!"

And one of them ran and fetched the golden crown; and they put it on Drakesbill's head and hailed him as king. And Drakesbill, who had made up his mind not to be surprised at anything, sat very still and took it all as a matter of course.

"He doesn't look much like a king," whispered a few idle fellows; but they were soon driven out of the hall and made to understand that it was wrong even to think such words.

"He will be the best king we have ever had," said others. And some who had known him before said: "A Drakesbill is better any day than a king who does nothing but spend our money."

And that is the way in which little Drakesbill became king. When he had been crowned, and the people had finished shouting, he made a speech from the throne. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I am very hungry. Let us all go to supper."

THE TREE AND THE REEDS.

A STRONG Oak Tree stood on the bank of a river. One day a fierce Wind tore it up by the roots and cast it into the stream. As it was floating away it called out to the Reeds, and asked them how it happened that they had not been blown down also.

"It is very strange," said the Tree, "that I who am so large and strong, and who battled so hard with the Wind, should be beaten and overcome, while you who are so weak and slender should escape."

"It is because you battled with the Wind that you were rooted up," answered the Reeds. "We do not battle with him; we bow before him, and so he passes us by and never harms us."

THE NEST BUILDERS.

A VERY long time ago, before you or I can remember, the magpie was the only bird that knew much about nest building. One day the other birds came to her and asked her to teach them how to make nice nests like her own. She told them to stand in a circle all around her, and then she began to show them how it was done. The first thing she did was to get some mud and make a little round cake of it.

"How very easy!" said the thrush. "Now I know all that is to be learned about nest building." She flew away to her home in the meadows; and thrushes make their nests mostly of a cake of mud to this very day.

The magpie then took some slender twigs and laid them across and around the cake of mud.

"That is all I need to learn," said the blackbird, flying away in great haste. And blackbirds have never yet learned anything more.

Then the magpie put another layer of mud on top of the twigs.

"Oh, oh!" cried the owl. "Who, ah, who would need a better nest than that?" And no owl has ever tried to have a better nest.

But the magpie went on working. After beating

down the mud into the right shape, she took some more twigs and wound them loosely around the outside.

"That suits me," said the sparrow; "and I'll go and make a nest just like it." And sparrows are still satisfied with untidy nests made of a daub of mud and a few sticks thrown around them.

Then the magpie brought straw and soft feathers and lined the nest with great care, so that it would be a nice pleasant place to sit in.

The starling was delighted, and cried out, "Good! good! Feathers and straw make the best nests!" And away she flew without taking much notice of the foundation of mud and the framework of twigs.

And so it happened that all the birds learned something from the magpie, but not one of them had the patience to stay until she had finished her lesson.

The last bird that came was the turtle dove, and she was so listless that she took no notice of what the magpie had been doing. While the magpie was putting the last touches to her beautiful nest, Mrs. Dove could do nothing but sit on a leafy twig above her and call out:—

"Take two, two, Toosy, take two!"

This made the magpie angry, and she stopped

while placing a straw around the topmost edge of the nest, and said:—

"Only one, I tell you; only one!"

But the turtle dove kept on: "Take two, two, Toosy, take two!"

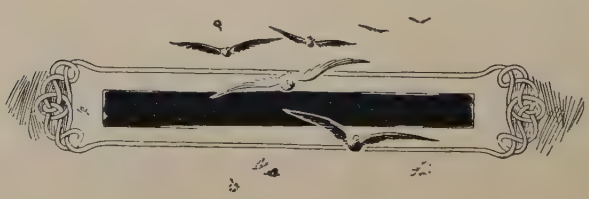
The magpie could stand it no longer: "One's enough for such as you!" she cried.

"Take two, two, Toosy, take two!" said the turtle dove, looking away off across the meadow, and hearing not a word.

This made the magpie so angry that she dropped the straw and flew away before she had ended her lesson.

"What's the use of trying to teach people who think they already know everything?" she said.

And that is how it happens that the different kinds of birds build their nests in so many different ways. The magpie never tried to teach them again; and, indeed, they were very well content; for each one believed that there was nothing more to be learned.



THE LARK AND THE FARMER.

In a field of wheat there was a Lark's nest, and in the nest there were four young Larks almost large enough to fly. One morning when the mother Lark was going out for something to eat she said to her little ones: —

"The wheat is now ripe enough to be cut, and there is no telling how soon the reapers will come. So keep wide awake to-day, and when I come home tell me all that you see or hear.

The little Larks promised that they would do so, and the mother flew singing away.

She was hardly out of sight when the Farmer who owned the field came with his son to look at his wheat. "I tell you what, John," he said, "it is time that this wheat was cut. Go round to our neighbors this evening and ask them to come to-morrow and help us."

When the old Lark came home the young ones told her what they had heard; and they were so

badly frightened that they begged her to move them out of the field at once.

"There is no hurry," she said. "If he waits for his neighbors to come, he will have to wait a long time."

The next day while the mother Lark was away, the Farmer and his son came again.

"John, did you ask the neighbors to come?" said the Farmer.

"Yes, sir," said John, "and they all promised to be here early."

"But they have not come," said the Farmer, "and the wheat is so ripe that it must be cut at once. Since our neighbors have failed us, we must call in our kinsfolk. So mount your horse and ride round to all your uncles and cousins, and ask them to be sure and come to-morrow and help us."

The young Larks were in great fear when they heard this, and in the evening they told their mother all about it.

"Mother," they said, "we shall be killed if we stay here another day. Our wings are strong enough; let us fly away right now."

"Don't be in a hurry," said the mother. "If the Farmer waits for his kinsfolk, the wheat will not be cut to-morrow; for the uncles and cousins have their own harvest work to do."

She went out again the next day, but told the young ones to notice everything that happened while she was gone.

Towards noon the Farmer and his son came into the field.

"See how late in the day it is," said the Farmer, "and not a man has come to help us."

"And the grain is so ripe that it is all falling down and going to waste," said his son.

"Yes," said the Farmer, "and since neither our friends nor our kinsfolk will help us, we must do the work ourselves. Let us go home and whet our scythes and get everything ready, so that we can begin before sunrise in the morning."

The old Lark came home quite early that day, and the little Larks told her what they had heard.

"Now, indeed, it is time for us to be off," she said. "Shake your wings and get ready to fly; for when a man makes up his mind to do a thing himself, it is pretty sure to be done."

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE.

A FISHERMAN and his wife lived in a hut close by the sea. They were very poor. The man used to go out in his boat all day to catch fish; and he would fish, and fish, and fish. Some days he caught all that he and his wife could eat; some days he caught more, and then they had fish to sell; and some days he caught none at all.

One day as he sat in his boat, with his fishing-rod in his hand, and gazed at the sea, he felt his line pulled. He drew it up, and there was a fine large fish fast on the hook.

"Please put me back! Please put me back!" said the fish.

"Why so?" said the fisherman.

"I am not a real fish," said the fish. "I may look like one, but I am a prince that has been bewitched. Please put me back and let me go."

"Of course I'll put you back," said the man. "I don't want to eat a fish that can talk. I would rather have no dinner at all."

Then he took the fish off the hook and threw it back into the sea. There was a long streak of blood in the water behind it as it sank out of sight. The fisherman gazed into the sea awhile, and then went home in his boat.

"Did you catch any fish to-day?" said his wife.

"Only one," he said. "I caught a fine large one, but it said that it was a prince, and so I threw it back into the sea."

"Did you ask it for anything?" said the woman.

"No," said the man. "What would I ask of a fish?"

"You might have asked it for a nice little cottage," she said. "It is hard to have to live all our lives in a wretched hut like this."

"Ask a fish for a cottage?" said he. "Do you think it would give us one?"

"Certainly," said she. "Have you never heard the song,

> "'Ask anything of a talking fish,
> And he will give you what you wish'?

Now get into your boat and go and call him; say that we want a neat little cottage with three rooms, and a vine climbing over the door."

The man did not like to go back at all; but his wife kept talking and talking till at last he got into his boat and rowed away.

When he came to the place where he had caught the fish, the sea was green and dark, and not bright and clear as it had been before. He stood up in his boat and sang:—

"Once a prince, but now a fish,
Come and listen to my wish.
Come! for my wife, Nancy Bell,
Wishes what I fear to tell."

All at once the fish stuck his head up out of the water and said, "Well, what is it you want?"

"I don't want anything," said the man. "But my wife wants a neat cottage with three rooms, and a vine climbing up over the door."

"Go home," said the fish. "She shall have it."

The man turned his boat and rowed back home; and there was his wife sitting on a bench in front of a neat little cottage. She took him by the hand and said, "Come in, come in. See how much better this is than the dirty hut which we had." They went in and looked at the pretty sitting room and the cozy bedroom, and the kitchen with everything in it that anybody could want. And outside was a yard with chickens and ducks running about, and a little garden full of good things to eat.

"Isn't this nice?" said the wife.

"Yes," said the man, "and we will live here and be happy all our lives."

"We'll think about it," said his wife.

All went very well for three or four weeks. Then the woman began to find fault with things. The

house was too small for her, and so were the yard and the garden.

"How I should like to be a fine lady, and live in a great stone castle," she said.

"This cottage is good enough for me," said the man.

"It may be good enough for you," said she, "but it is not good enough for me. Go back to the fish and tell him to give us a great stone castle with high walls and towers."

"I don't like to go," said he. "The fish gave us the cottage, and he might not like it if we asked him for something else."

"He won't care," said the wife. "Go and ask him at once. I cannot bear to live in this little house another day. Go!"

The man got into his boat and rowed slowly away. When he came to the place where he had caught the fish, he stood up and sang:—

"Once a prince, but now a fish,
Come and listen to wife's wish.
Come! for my dear Nancy Bell
Wishes what I fear to tell."

"Well, what does she want now?" asked the fish.

"I like the cottage best," said the man; "but she wants to live in a great stone castle."

"A great stone castle it is," said the fish. "Go home. She is standing at the door, waiting for you."

So the fisherman turned his boat and rowed back home; and there, close by the sea, was a great stone castle; and a very fine lady who looked like his wife was standing at the door.

She took him by the hand, and they went in; and there was a broad hall with a marble floor; and up stairs and down, there were fine rooms with tables and chairs all covered with gold; and crowds of servants stood around ready to wait upon them; and the big table in the dining hall was loaded with food and drink such as they had never heard of before. After dinner the man and woman walked out to see their stables, and fine gardens, and the great park

where were deer and hares and everything anybody could want.

"Isn't this grand?" said the wife

"Yes," said the man, "and we will live here and be happy all our lives."

"We'll think about it," said his wife.

All went well till the next morning. The wife woke up first and looked out of the window at the fine country which lay around the castle.

"Husband, get up!" she said. "Get up, and look out of the window. I wish I was the king of all this land."

"Why so?" said her husband. "I think we are well enough off as we are. I don't want to be king."

"Well, but *I* want to be king," said the wife. "Go back to the fish and tell him so."

The fisherman did not like to go. "It is not right! It is not right!" he said.

But his wife said, "Go at once!"

So he got into his boat and rowed away. When he came to the place where he had caught the fish, he stood up and sang: —

"Once a prince, but now a fish,
Come and listen to wife's wish.
Come! for lady Nancy Bell
Wishes what I fear to tell."

"Well, what does she want now?" said the fish

"I am ashamed to tell you," said the man; "but she wants to be king."

"Go home," said the fish; "she has her wish."

The fisherman turned his boat and rowed back home. When he got to the shore he saw that the castle was much larger than before; and there were sentinels at the gates, and crowds of soldiers were marching back and forth, and there was a great noise of drums and trumpets. Inside of the castle everything was of silver and gold; and in the great hall was his wife sitting on a throne of ivory and pearls. She had a crown of gold on her head, and many fine ladies and gentlemen stood around her.

"Isn't this glorious?" said she.

"Yes," said the man. "Now we have nothing else to wish for."

"I don't know about that," said his wife.

"But you will be satisfied now, won't you, wife?" he said.

"No, indeed, I will not," she said.

That night she lay in bed, thinking and thinking, and wishing that there was something else she could have. The fisherman slept well and soundly, for he had done a good deal of work that day, rowing his boat back and forth. But his wife turned from one side to the other the whole night through,

and did not sleep a wink. At last the sun began to rise, and when she saw the red light come in at her window, she thought: "Ha! how I should like to be the master of the sun!"

Then she shook her husband and said, "Get up! Get up! Go out to the fish and tell him that I want to be the master of the sun."

The fisherman was so frightened that he fell out of the bed. Then he rubbed his eyes and said: "What did you say, wife?"

"I want to be the master of the sun," she said. "I want to make it rise when I choose, and set when I choose, and stand still when I choose."

"Oh, wife," said the man, all in a tremble, "do you want to be a god?"

"That's just what I want to be," she said. "Go out to the fish and tell him so."

"You'd better let well enough alone," said the man. "You are king now; let us be contented!"

This made the woman very angry. She pushed him with her foot, and screamed: "I will not be contented! I will not be contented! Go, and do as I bid you!"

So the man hurried away to his boat. He tried to row out to his fishing place, but a great storm came up, and the waves were so high that he could not see which way to go. The sky was black as

ink, and the thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed, and the winds blew terribly. So he shouted as loud as he could: —

"Once a prince, but now a fish,
Come and listen to wife's wish.
Come! for king Nancy Bell
Wishes what I fear to tell."

"Well, what does she want now?" said the fish.

"She wants — she wants to be the master of the sun," said the man, in a whisper.

"She wants to be a god, does she?" said the fish.

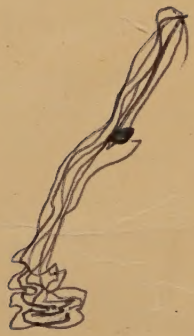
"Ah, yes! That is what she wants to be," said the man.

"Go home, then," said the fish. "You will find her in the poor little dirty hut by the sea."

And there the fisherman and his wife are living to this day.

THE END.

Typography by J. S. Cushing & Co., Norwood, Mass.



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